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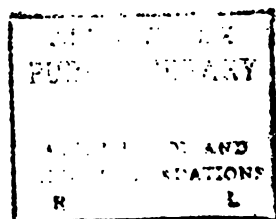


## ANCHORS AWEIGH

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Pulling . . . the tugs warped the ship from the pier . . . shoved her sideways . . . and moved ahead . . . down-stream.





# ANCHORS AWEIGH

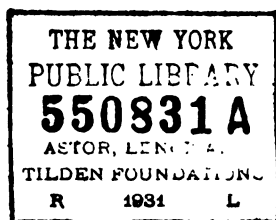
BY  
HARRIET WELLES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
HON. JOSEPHUS DANIELS  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

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ROY W. B.  
JAN  
1920



TO  
ROGER



## INTRODUCTION

"THAT isn't merely a story of the Navy: it is a classic."

With these words to one very dear I laid down the magazine from which I had read aloud Harriet Welles's story of "The Admiral's Birthday." It was the kind of intimate touch of the love of husband and wife that makes one "teary around the lashes," as Lowell would say. That was my first introduction to the stories of this interpreter of the phase of Navy life that makes Navy people one big family. It is a life of separations and many honeymoons, for "Orders" take the male partners to all corners of the globe. The wife must wait at home while the husband braves the danger of the deep, and latterly the terrors of the submarine stiletto. She may not—so deeply do both Navy tradition and Navy superstition dominate all in the service—stand on the shore and




wave "good-by" to her sailor as his ship sails away. "It is bad luck," all sailor wives will tell you, to "watch your husband's ship as it sets sail." So the "good-by" must be said in some inn or hotel in the port if it happens she can accompany him to the place of embarkation. Or she remains at home with the bairns, and gives him a brave farewell while the yearning for his home-staying tugs at her heart. For these are valorous sailor wives. She must not let her man go to sea without the smile of victory over her longing to keep him close by the fireside.

Mrs. Welles has given us the true interpretation of the home a Navy woman makes when, with the partner gone, she is waiting for his ship to come back. She makes you actually feel, gives you thrill of the reunited hearts when "Jack comes home again." There are more honeymoons in the Navy than in any other service, for the end of every tour of sea duty is another new mating of heart with heart. The pang of the parting! Is it compensated for by the joy of the return?

"The Admiral's Birthday" gave me such



pleasure that all her other stories have been eagerly read. The latest, "Orders," has the pathos and the tragedy of the great war which still casts its sombre shadow over us. The gifted writer has imparted something of the feeling of sympathy all of us had felt in the Navy Department as the brave naval officer walked in the shadow while his wife, equally brave, "crossed over the river." They were in the Service, and Duty was the supreme command. The devoted wife was buoyed up for the moment by her pride in her husband's great enterprise. Who can even faintly understand how great the sacrifice and how noble the courage when she bade him go with his great guns to make a new glory for the Navy! Such renunciation must have been pleasing to the All Good as he looked down and saw the bravery of her spirit rising superior to her weakness of body. And the captain—the heroic spirit—restless and ambitious to do the great things of which he had dreamed and planned. Was it possible to make naval ordnance a decisive force in land warfare? That had been debated. He had argued, and he had won. It was given to me to sign his



"Orders." War is imperative—he must go at once or the opportunity would pass and victory be delayed. Must he renounce the call of duty and opportunity to remain by the side of her who was dearer to him than life? The doctors told him the malady was incurable, and he could not help her, but that did not make the going a lesser agony. Should he go? That was the path of duty to service and to country. Should he stay? That was the heart's desire and the man's intense longing. Which was the bravest: the stricken wife, who talked of future honeymoon trips while she sent him away knowing they would never look into each other's eyes in life, or the husband, clutching at his throat and staggering through the night as he shut out the light of her eyes to hasten to danger and duty? If "The Admiral's Birthday" was a classic, "Orders" is an epic, and the other stories have a glow and tender pathos which have permitted other than Navy eyes to look upon the lights and shadows of a service which has lately come into new appreciation by the American people. It is only a glimpse, but let us hope Mrs. Welles will give

## Introduction

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us other pen pictures of those conquerors of the sea whose love is as tender as their profession is rigorous. It might truly be said of the men Mrs. Welles depicts:

"The bravest are the tenderest  
The loving are the daring."

JOSEPHUS DANIELS.



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# ANCHORS AWEIGH

## I

### IN THE DAY'S WORK

THE old petty officer in charge of the drills drew a deep breath and looked down the long lines of newly enlisted apprentice seamen. A few of the boys were from the poorer quarters of near-by cities and towns; some were from the farming districts; but the greater number were undergraduates from colleges and universities flocking to the colors at the first intimation of their country's need, and all were astonishingly transformed, by the mere donning of uniforms and caps, into potential sailors for the ships of the United States navy.

The petty officer cleared his throat. Somehow the sunshiny parade-ground, bordered by cheerful, yellow-brick barracks and backed by the sparkling blue of Narragansett Bay and the distant, pointed spires of Newport

## In the Day's Work

churches, seemed too incongruously peaceful compared with the things of which he was trying to speak. He cleared his throat again.

"I'd like to remind you, lads," he said, "that there are some things in our navy that you'll have to *learn* for yourselves. We can teach you the manual of arms and the drills; and there are schools here to train you for any branch of ship's work that you have a leaning toward—wireless, electricity, signal corps, hospital corps, engineering, cooking, and yeoman's work—but what you've got to get, if you're to be of any *real use*, is the *spirit* of the navy!

"Maybe there's those with education enough to explain that spirit to you. I haven't got the words. I only know what it means in actions. Summed up, it amounts to about this: aboard ship there ain't no *you* and there ain't no *me*; there's just *Us*! And we're working together under the flag of the finest country on earth.


"You lads have come away from your folks, and your homes, and your colleges to help get a bad job done; and when the job's finished some of you will go back to your

colleges, and your folks, and your homes—and some won't.

"But if the ones that go back have gotten the real spirit of the navy—the spirit that was already strong when boys like you were rampaging over the seas on the old wooden ship *Constellation* that's tied up to the wharf here—they'll go back, and carry with them through the remainder of their lives the knowledge that in time of squalls their hand was steady in the service of the rest of the ship; that they helped, to the end, the mess-mate who had fallen; and that when it seemed like it was their turn next they looked death straight in the eye. That's what we call the Spirit of the Navy. Don't forget it!

"Now! Atten-shun! I'll explain the anchor-watch to you."

The ship's doctor dropped stiffly into his seat at the ward-room luncheon-table and whimsically surveyed his brother officers. Perhaps he had grown accustomed to the white look of fatigue and tension that distinguishes the expression of the naval officers




who, for months now, have faced death on destroyers and transports on the North Sea; perhaps his New England training came back to him in half-remembered sayings about enduring what can't be remedied, and the hopeful suggestions of turns in seemingly interminable roads. At any rate he ignored the obvious and soared, conversationally, into the cheerfully problematical.

"I've been wondering all morning if I hadn't better try out an unpatented invention of a Buddhist priest I saw in Japan," observed the doctor, helping himself to tinned sardines and damp crackers. "The old fellow was sweeping off the immaculate white straw mats of a Kyoto temple, and as he frisked over to collect an entrance fee of me I noticed that both sides of his nose were securely plugged with wads of rice-paper.

"How come?' I questioned, pointing at them.

"He waited devoutly while some worshippers eased down on their fine work with the prayer-gong before he answered, 'Cold on the head, have got!' and intimated that much valuable time might be lost if he had



to stop every time he needed to blow his nose; and, besides, as he indulgently informed me, he hadn't ever owned a handkerchief. I've been thinking of trying his scheme out on the crew of this ship.

"They've every variety of cough and whoop, from the copy of a lyric cry to a replica of the Gregorian chant. I'll always remember this cruise by the opportunities I've had to study snuffles."

The mess listened with a visible easing of tension. "If the old fellow's cold was *really* bad I should think his procedure would, in time, have made his brain come adrift. How did he breathe?" questioned the executive officer.


"Oh, he just let his mouth hang jauntily open. A nose isn't really a necessity any more than an appendix is; it's an ornament," said the doctor, cheerfully surveying the mess. "Of course I don't mean that *all* noses are ornamental," he added, and dodged a cracker thrown by the navigator.

"Too bad you fellows can't get a glimpse of your great-great-great-grandchildren when the manufacturers of food substitutes, pre-

servatives, and adulterations, and we surgeons have, by our combined and unceasing efforts, permanently divorced them from their unnecessary decorations. No teeth! No hair! No tonsils! No appendixes! No gall-bladders! No—but I'll spare you. It'll be a neat and trim population in those happy days," said the doctor with dramatic airiness.

"My great-great-grandchildren!" observed the engineer officer, and glanced through the rain-streaked port-hole past which gray, foam-crested waves raced before the icy wind, under a heavy sky.

A little silence fell upon the mess; they all knew that the engineer officer's first-born had arrived in this warring world a month after its father had joined the ship, and except for photographs he had never seen it. His wife wrote of the baby's superlative beauty and charm and planned for the happy days of reunion, but somehow a shadowy foreboding that crouched behind her cheering words had eluded her and crept into the envelope to loom large when the letter was opened. The engineer officer broke the silence with hasty querulousness.



"Be thankful there's nothing worse than colds the matter with the crew," he admonished, and set his teeth under a swift stab of pain; for several days these attacks had come with increasing frequency and violence. "This is no time to get sick," his spirit asserted with grim anger at the inopportune besieger.

"What about my keeping in practice?" asked the doctor, and added: "These are queer days in the navy! I was talking with one of the petty officers who drilled the apprentice seamen at the training-station last summer, and the old fellow was *upset*! He had a big lot of boys fresh from different colleges to train, and they overturned all his previous experiences. He went carefully over the manual of arms with them the first day, and the next morning, to his amazed astonishment, they executed each order with unvarying precision.

"'You know these exercises already?' he questioned bewilderedly.

"'Why, yes,' answered one of the boys; 'you told them to us yesterday.'

"You see, the new apprentice seamen




represented the college-trained product, to whom concentration is a necessity. The petty officer's experience had been with boys of less education, who learn by the frequent repetition of drilling, *and* drilling, and *drilling*—the mechanical action of untrained minds," explained the doctor.

"I should think that with such new material we could build up a magnificent personnel," exclaimed the executive enthusiastically.

The doctor smiled. "You haven't been reading your little book of fables lately, or you'd remember that everything has its disadvantages," he admonished, and added: "The old classes of apprentice seamen hadn't trained minds, but most of them had learned the ground-plan rules of discipline—poverty generally inculcates that. The new boys don't know the meaning of the word! As far as they're concerned, it's an incoherent assortment of syllables made up from unintelligible letters.

"One indignant youth returned to the training-station to find that the ship he was assigned to had sailed. 'I like their nerve—



going off without me!' he asserted in loud and righteous wrath to the petty officer engaged in warping him toward the brig. 'I sent them word that my mother had come up to see me, so they needn't expect me back until she'd left—and they've gone *without waiting* for me!'

"Another lad had been notified that he was to stand watch from four to eight, but some acquaintances motored over from Nar-ragansett, so he sent a message to the captain that he wouldn't be able to get back until later, as he was to dine with friends at a restaurant which he ingenuously named. Imagine his resentful indignation when, just after the soup had been served, he was snatched into a standing position by an unsympathetic master-at-arms. 'I sent the captain word,' he expostulated. '*Is that* so? What's a captain? 'Tis the admiral you should have notified,' commented the master-at-arms witheringly.

"This same boy is my hospital apprentice now, and he's as keen as a razor. He still grins sheepishly over his farewell dinner-party, but he has ideas of his own! We have


great arguments about a surgeon's privileges and responsibilities—" The doctor broke off and glanced about. "I don't *eat* more than the rest of you; I *talk* more," he explained, and turned his attention to his luncheon.

The engineer officer leaned forward. "What does your hospital apprentice think a surgeon's privileges are?" he asked idly.

"Oh, the right to decide whether the future holds enough for a patient to make his life worth living. I tell him that no one can guess what the future *may* hold," laughed the doctor.

Outside the wind was rising and the rain, like fine steel wires, whipped across the portholes as the ship, with undiminished speed, swept along on her prescribed course. "Nasty weather," commented the executive; then, struck by something in the engineer officer's face, asked: "*What ails* you? You look green and seasick!"

"Me seasick!" ejaculated the engineer, with ungrammatical scorn, as he pushed back his chair. "I've had a queer pain for two or three days. I may be around to see you later in the afternoon, doc."



The doctor nodded hospitably. "I'm specializing on colds at present, but of course—" He glanced keenly at the engineer officer. "Better come along with me now," he suggested.

The engineer shook his head. "I've several things to attend to," he said as he hurried away.

"He never thinks of any engines—except the ship's," complained the doctor, making his way back to his quarters and the routine duties of his afternoon.

The doctor's tiny office was also his consulting and operating room, and, after glancing about and noting that everything was in order and the apprentice at his post, he gave the signal for a bugler to sound sick-call.

"That's a pretty call," observed the apprentice, as the birdlike crescendo—muffled because of circumstances—sounded through the narrow passages.

"Sounds all right to those who haven't anything the matter with them," growled the doctor, still bothered by the engineer

officer's white face. "Here they come," he added, as the distant chorus of coughs drew nearer.

"This beats the way doctors ashore sit around and wait for patients," observed the hospital apprentice conversationally; "here, when *you're* ready, you just have a bugle blown." He stepped back and busied himself with a tray of instruments as the doorway filled with a group of sailors.

The doctor glanced keenly at his patients, while his capable hands moved swiftly: there were some burns to dress and rebandage, a wrenched arm to ease by a light sling, several decreasing colds to prescribe for, an injured foot to examine and pronounce cured, and one feverish boy to consign to the unblemished whiteness of the tiny sick-bay, where he could be under observation.

"We'll get into port day after to-morrow. If he develops anything in the meantime we'll be able to transfer him then to a hospital ashore," mused the doctor as the last patient filed out.

"Seems impertinent for a disease to attack a man when he's on such duty as this,"

---

observed the hospital apprentice, steadying himself as the ship, after climbing up the long, steep hill of a great wave, plunged sharply down into a yawning gulf.

"Last year at this time I was fiddling around Cambridge and Boston," said the apprentice reflectively, as he closed the cover of the sterilizer, "and my chief grievance was that my mother would keep urging me to go and see the Sargent and Abbey paintings in the public library; she wrote about them so often that it got on my nerves. It seems centuries ago!"

"Did it get on your nerves enough to make you obey her?" questioned the doctor.

The hospital apprentice smiled. "No," he confessed, then added comfortably: "I'll go and see them after the war is over; there'll be lots of time for pictures then."

"You think you'll have learned by that time to obey orders?" asked the doctor.

The apprentice laughed. "Discipline is now my middle name," he asserted genially.

The doctor, glancing about the tiny room, noted the immaculate orderliness of the compact arrangements, and thought: "I *am*

lucky in getting that boy for a hospital apprentice. Come in!" he called, and started forward at sight of the engineer officer's drawn face.

"Yes?" questioned the doctor.

The engineer could hardly achieve a twisted, rueful smile. "I've had intermittent pain for nearly a week—but just now—something—must—have—happened," he gasped, and crumpled into a limp heap. The doctor groaned as he felt the feverish hands and wrists. "Why couldn't he have given me a chance before it wore him out?" he demanded of the appalled apprentice, as the engineer officer opened his heavy eyes.

There followed some moments of minute examination and a hurried conference with the captain and executive officer.

"The fever is rising—perforated appendix, I think. Ought to operate at once—although it's pretty rough," commented the doctor with laconic brevity. "I'll do all I can to hold him over until we get in to port, but, of course, I won't wait a minute if in my opinion the operation becomes necessary. Too bad they didn't teach us to operate while doing gymnastic exercises at our hospital!

But there are fairly smooth spaces when the ship is climbing a wave."

The doctor went back to the engineer's cabin and relieved the hospital apprentice. "You'd better get everything ready—in case I need them. And keep watch of that boy in the sick-bay; if his temperature goes up call me," said the doctor, as he settled down in a chair by the narrow bunk.

The engineer officer, opening tired eyes, looked at the doctor's kindly face. "Beastly poor taste for me to cave in now," he said, and hesitated. "Is it—anything serious?" he asked.

The doctor shook his head. "The usual common or garden variety of appendicitis; you should have come to me before. Earlier there was a chance of my being able to reduce the inflammation, but now I'll probably have to operate," he said.

The engineer officer drew a deep breath. "The pain—is almost unbearable," he whispered between clinched teeth, his face wet with perspiration.


The afternoon dragged by, punctuated by the creaking of straining bulkheads, the rac-



ing of the screw, the shrieking of wind, and lashing of rain, as the ship forged ahead through the mist.

By evening there was no chance, in the doctor's opinion, of avoiding the operation. He leaned over the engineer officer and told him this decision, even as he realized that the wide, shining eyes held no glance of comprehension. A few minutes later they carried the oblivious engineer through narrow passages to the tiny operating-room, where the hospital apprentice, inwardly quaking under the responsibility of assisting at a serious operation, stood, flanked by sterilized instruments, dressings, and sponges, and the ether which he was to administer.

The doctor adjusted the sterile dressings and, fastening the abdominal binder, removed the gauze pad from over his mouth. "That is good work—if I do say it myself!" he said; "and not one second too soon. Some day, when I have time, I'll write an article for the medical journals on performing major operations during a hurricane on the North Sea." He glanced at the hospital apprentice



approvingly. "You were wasting your time at Harvard learning to be a lawyer! You'd make a first-class surgeon," he praised, and his assistant flushed with pleasure as he turned toward the sterilizer with a tray full of instruments.

The doctor helped straighten the cabin, keeping a watchful eye on the still figure of the engineer officer. "Better to keep him right here. I can take care of him and regulate the temperature, too," he mused, and added aloud: "I'll be glad to get him safely ashore, though. A sea voyage may be good for *some* sick people, but every rule has its exception. Now, lad, you'd better get to your hammock. There'll be another day to-morrow—and it's nearly here!"

"I couldn't go to sleep now," protested the apprentice, turning the leaves of a medical text-book. He mumbled over the words: "Incision, superficial fascia—external oblique muscle—internal oblique—normal salt solutions—string suture—catgut. Gracious! Did you do all those things to him?" questioned the apprentice, busily informing himself on appendicitis operations.

The doctor smiled. "All those!" he agreed.

The apprentice turned the pages. "Listen to this!" he began, and read an account of the decision by a doctor to let a deformed and mentally deficient child die. "Caused a lot of criticism," commented the hospital apprentice; "but I should think that any sensible person would side with the physician—wouldn't you?"

"No," answered the doctor grimly. "Every human being should have his chance—you never can tell *what* may be waiting just around the corner. Where would we end if every surgeon had the right to decide who was—or wasn't—entitled to go on living?" The doctor laughed. "Most of our consciences will warn us to avoid the operating-table when those ideas go into effect," he commented.

"Well, I don't know—" began the apprentice, and helped the doctor fix the blankets around the engineer officer, who was beginning to toss feebly about and mumble a few disconnected words. "Piston—furnace—rods—bolts—oil—wrenches" passed haltingly in review several times; twice, with growing

distinctness, he spoke of the gauge. "Do—your—best—boys!" urged the engineer officer cheerily.

"Funny how the work aboard ship gets into the marrow of a man's bones," whispered the apprentice wonderingly; "even ether won't drive it out!"

"It's—all—in the—day's work," mumbled the engineer. "Whatever—happens, do—your—best! Then—it—won't—be your fault. It'll be—all in—the day's—work!" The words evidently appealed to him. "All—in the—day's work," he whispered.

"Sometimes it's a long day," yawned the doctor tiredly; then sought diversion in conversation. "What were you doing a year ago to-night?" he asked.

"Well, I can't remember *exactly*," said the apprentice. "I had a crush on a girl whose people have a nice old place at Dedham, and I was out there most of the fall. She *was* a pretty girl—attractive, too; but the train service to Dedham was poor, and after winter closed in it grew so cold travelling back and forth that I gave up going to see her. I was *awfully* in love with that girl! *What was her*

*name?*" mused the hospital apprentice perplexedly.

The doctor smiled; this was what he had hoped for. "Will you hunt her up again after the war?" he asked with earnest solicitude.

The hospital apprentice eyed him belligerently. "With any kind of luck she'll have grandchildren before this war is over," he prophesied darkly. "I'll come home a doddering, *famous* old gentleman whom she'll be proud to have known. 'Have you forgotten how I loved you?' I'll quaver," enlarged the apprentice, growing sorry for himself and his blighted happiness.

The doctor was not romantic. "Maybe she'll have forgotten your name, too," he suggested heartlessly.

The hospital apprentice lapsed into a wilted silence.


The engineer officer was holding a heated, if halting, technical conversation with his engine-room assistant. "You're wrong about that valve, Austin," he repeated monotonously. The doctor waited until he quieted down.

"How did you happen to apply for the hospital corps?" he inquired, knowing from experience that almost any topic could be amusing when viewed through the apprentice's eyes.

"Process of elimination," answered the boy. "My governor doesn't believe in encouraging idleness, so during each summer vacation I take a shot at 'earning my salt.' I've had a try at enough different kinds of home diversions to know that I wasn't keen to shovel, or oil, or scrub much; besides, I like to save lives," asserted the apprentice modestly. "I often think how I'd act on a sinking ship. 'This way to life-boat No. 11! Women and kids first! Heave ho on the line, my hearties!'" declaimed the apprentice dramatically.

The doctor smiled, then stood up to hold the blankets over the engineer officer. "Wish he wouldn't toss around," he said.

The engineer opened his eyes and looked vaguely about. "Mary?" he whispered, and waited. "Mary!" called the engineer officer, and lowered his voice. "Didn't—I—tell you I'd—be—back?" he questioned.



"I've come—safely back—to you—Mary," he affirmed.


Outside the wind had risen to a high, thin shriek; the rain lashed across the port-holes and contrasted strangely with the sunshiny garden of dreams in which the sick man's mind lingered. He spoke comfortingly.

"Yes—Mary, dear—we'll have—iris and—lilacs, syringas and—lilies," he promised faintly. "A—little house—vines, and a—curving path—a meadow—with long shadows—on the grass—and apple-blossoms!" His voice changed to a low, accentless tone: "Don't cry—little wife—this is what—happens when—a man goes down—to the sea—in ships. The partings—are cruelly—hard."

He tossed feverishly. "Mary and—the—baby!" said the engineer officer with clear distinctness.

There was silence except for the roar of the wind.

The engineer spoke again. "A—fine, generous—young country—America," he whispered musingly; "not what—our forefathers intended—perhaps—but lovable! They forget—so quickly—Americans, because



—they're young," he explained, and went on: "When the—war is over—we'll have—the little house—blue smoke from the chimneys—across the—winter sky—jonquils, in spring—and birds, calling—calling to—Mary, and—the—baby," asserted the engineer officer in a wistful voice and looked fixedly at the doctor.

The hospital apprentice tucked in a blanket end. "Funny what they remember, isn't it? I wouldn't have guessed that he had an ounce of sentiment——"

The engineer officer was speaking; it was the continuation, no doubt, of a conversation ended weeks before. "Don't cry—Mary," he comforted. "Soon, perhaps—I'll be back—and then—we'll try to save—toward getting—the little house." He wrinkled his forehead in thoughtful perplexity. "I can't remember—how it goes—but it's something about—there not being—'any more sea!' Don't cry, Mary—I *promise you*—there shall not be—any more sea."

The doctor glanced toward the black circle of the port-hole. "Guess there'll be a lot of us who will have had enough sea by the




time this cruise is over," he commented cheerfully. "I feel quite differently about the emigration question since I've been intimately acquainted with the climate over here. I don't wonder they're all so keen about getting 'a place in the sun.' Even such a poor, half-baked, watery sun as theirs is!"

The hospital apprentice grinned. "'Dampness is what makes the trees so green,'" he quoted provocatively.

"Humph!" growled the doctor.

"What are they going to live on—if anything happens to me?" questioned the engineer officer, so coherently that the apprentice jumped; the worried tone changed to command: "Clean up that bright work," he ordered; "what sort of showing will we make at inspection—with it that way?" Suddenly his unrecognizing eyes filled with tears. "*I can't die!*" groaned the engineer. "Can't you realize that—there's *nothing* for them to live on?" He paused and looked vaguely about. "Where am I?" he questioned.

"Try to lie still," suggested the doctor, and shook his head at the unanswering stare.



"He will be out from under the anæsthetic in a few minutes," he said, and added: "Time for you to turn in, young man."

The hospital apprentice yawned. "I *am* getting sleepy," he admitted; "I'll go to bed as soon as I've taken the temperature of that fellow in the sick-bay."

The doctor nodded. "I don't think he has anything but the beginning of a bad cold—and we've knocked that out—but I don't like to take chances," he said, pulling the blanket up over the tossing figure on the table. "Keep as quiet as you can!" he admonished soothingly to unheeding ears.

The engineer officer was far away from ships and storms and suffering.

"Apple-blossoms?" he suggested; "roses? 'Gather—your rosebuds—while you—may.' Time *doesn't*—fly very swiftly—nowadays, does it, dear? But nothing—lasts forever!—except love—" whispered the engineer to a woman who, leagues away, was filling the aching loneliness of the long days with lovely plans and dreams for the coming years.

"Teach the—baby to [be—like you. I—wouldn't ask anything better—than that!"


said the engineer gently. "And if I—don't come back—you'll be thankful—after the first—sorrow is over—that I—did my duty."

The doctor moved uneasily. "Feel as though I were listening at a keyhole or reading some one's letters," he growled. "I'll be glad when he quits talking."

The hospital apprentice returned. "Normal," he reported, putting down the thermometer; "he can go back to duty in the morning. Anything else I can do? What an awful night!" he commented, as the ship pitched into the trough of the sea.

"Yes," agreed the doctor; "when I write my prescription for a cottage in the country I'll omit the wind—as well as the sea. Must be fun to plan such things with your wife," he mused. "In the navy you spend most of your time planning for things you never get a chance to do. But anticipation is free!" He motioned toward the engineer. "He doesn't think of the days when the cottage roof will leak and the furnace go on a strike." He paused and looked closely at his patient.

"Hulloa, old man! Feeling all shot to




pieces at the hands of a trusted friend?" he questioned clearly.

The engineer officer smiled. "Hulloa, doc! Is it—over?" he whispered.

"It certainly is!" asserted the doctor. "That appendix is now attached to one of the swells of the sea and, judging from appearances, they're plenty strong enough to stand it! Now, if you'll lie still and take things easy you'll be as fit as a fiddle in a short time— Great Scott!" ejaculated the doctor as, with a deafening crash, the ship keeled sharply on her side.

There was a rain of broken glass, instruments, and hospital stores from the wall cabinets; in an instant the small cabin was littered with a chaotic mass of wreckage as the doctor climbed painfully to his feet and wiped the blood from a cut across his forehead out of his eyes.

The hospital apprentice, steadying an injured arm, helped the doctor pull the engineer's limp body back onto the table—then, turning, opened the door into the passageway and looked out. "Torpedoed!" whispered the apprentice, with a little gasp.



"The whole side's blown out—we'll have to hurry—to get away."

The doctor eyed him quietly. "Get the sailor in the sick-bay an overcoat and take him up on deck with you," he advised, adjusting a small pillow under the engineer officer's head. "And if you see the executive ask what the chances are for getting *him* away," he said, indicating the sick man.

"The executive's cabin was right above where the torpedo hit. He's dead, probably!" said the apprentice as he disappeared through the door.

From outside a terrific clamor had arisen; there was the shrill sound of escaping steam, the clatter of running feet, the clear call of a bugle, the sharp, insistent snapping of wrenched rivets and beams; and suddenly there came the dull boom of an explosion.

"*What has happened?*" whispered the engineer officer vaguely.

"Nothing—but what comes in the day's work," the doctor assured him, and added: "Will you lie *perfectly still* while I'm away for a few seconds?"

The engineer nodded. The doctor hurried

into the passage and ran up the gangway-ladder. Already the ship was listing; on deck an officer and some sailors were working at the lashings of the life-rafts. There was little confusion or noise except where the gunners were loading and firing the forward guns at the unoffending waves, and a quartermaster stolidly hoisted the distress signal flags across the sloping yard-arm.

The doctor smiled grimly as he spelled out the message.

Near by two overturned launches floated on the towering waves; a dreary curtain of mist shut down on any approaching help.

The doctor turned and went back to his cabin; smiling, he bent over the engineer officer. "I may need to do a little more to your side, but first—" He wrenched the wardrobe door loose and slid it carefully under the sick man. Deftly and swiftly he wound long woollen bandages across the engineer officer's body and around the door. "I need a little more space for you," he explained.

The engineer watched him with puzzled bewilderment.



The door to the passageway swung suddenly open. "Are you going to drown down here—like a rat in a trap?" demanded the hospital apprentice breathlessly from the doorway.

The doctor eyed him with stern disapproval. "Don't speak to me like that," he said.

The hospital apprentice laughed mirthlessly. "Discipline!" he ejaculated. "In a few minutes there won't be any discipline because there won't be any ship! Come up on deck where, at least, you'll have a fighting chance." He lowered his voice. "The submarine that got us came to the surface just now!"

"Did they offer to rescue any one?" questioned the doctor sharply as he carried the ether nearer.

"No," answered the apprentice. "The submarine's officers and crew laughed as they saw our men trying to launch the ship's boats and keep them afloat!" He hesitated, and motioned toward the engineer. "You can't save him! Come along!" he urged.

The doctor did not answer as he lowered



Even as they turned, the ship, with a sharp upward swing of her stern, lifted it high in the air—then . . . plunged down through the icy water.





the ether cone and bent over his patient.

"Can you understand me?" he questioned.

"Yes," whispered the sick man.

"Then do as I tell you—for *Mary and the baby!*" commanded the doctor.

The engineer officer nodded faintly.

"Breathe—deep! Breathe deep! Breathe deep! That's fine! Keep it up, old fellow," ordered the doctor, and glanced up at the appalled apprentice.

"I couldn't let a half-conscious man face the horror of the next few minutes!" commented the doctor. "Now, if he drowns, he won't know anything about it. It's the best I could do," explained the doctor humbly.

The ship, with a lurch, listed sharply to starboard; a wave of icy water ran across the deck. The doctor turned to the hospital apprentice.

"Is your good arm strong enough to help me get him up on deck?" he questioned breathlessly.

The hospital apprentice nodded. Together they hoisted the engineer up the gangway-ladder; together shoved the door out over the sloping side and watched it float away

with its unconscious burden on the crest of a great wave; then, steadying themselves, looked for a loose spar or life-preserver.

Even as they turned, the ship, with a sharp upward swing of her stern, lifted it high in the air—then, like a great stone, plunged down through the icy water.

But the engineer officer, struggling slowly back to health in an English hospital, will never again during his lifetime hear the wind blow and the rain beat against the window without feeling a helpless sense of agonized humbleness deeper and keener than pain.

## II

### THE ADMIRAL'S BIRTHDAY

ALTHOUGH it was a half-hour later than his usual breakfast-time, the admiral seemed in no hurry to leave the table. Idly his glance went from the large steel-and-glass case holding the silver service, presented by the ship's name-State, to the unnatural orderliness of the steel desk and the bare leather cushions on the steel sofa.

Outside, the bugler trailed by in the wake of the band; they had just finished playing the national anthem as the colors were hoisted, and a thrush, in a tasselled Chinese cage by the cabin port-hole, sang defiantly back. The admiral got up and looked thoughtfully at the bird.

"I never *could* get on happily aboard ship without a pet," he mused, and glanced toward the near-by shore. Fingering the catch, he unhooked and opened the little door.

"I can't carry a bird-cage about with me!


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I'd give you a *dot* if I knew how, Dick, but you haven't been in captivity long enough to have forgotten all your old ways," he said.

The thrush hopped to the opening, balanced a moment there, and went back into the cage, peering with questioning, beadlike eyes at his friend.

"It's all right, Dick," said the admiral, and turned away. "After forty-six years in the navy, I won't know what to do with my liberty either," he mused, walking aimlessly about the cabin. Before a small cabinet he stopped and opened the glass door with a key on his key-ring. Lifting the contents out, he put them one by one on the table. Valueless objects they were—souvenirs of sport or achievement, of folly or tragedy; useless as the garbled gleanings from a small boy's pocket; but cherished from association, and interesting to the initiated because of the glistening thread of adventure brightening all the intricately woven fabric—that is life.

First came a photograph of a group of men on the deck of an ice-bound ship. The admiral examined it gravely. "My midshipman's cruise—three years' surveying duty



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around northern Alaska, in the old *Patterson*—and we all wore side-whiskers,” he commented, and smiled. His wife had often remarked that if she had seen that photograph when she was engaged she would never have had the courage to marry him, for fear, in some misguided moment, he might be tempted to raise side-whiskers again.

Next he took out a string of fragile, iridescent shells. Before him Samoa gleamed in the sunshine serene and golden; sweet with jessamine, colorful with Bougainvillea, with palm-trees moving in the trade-wind; while above the thatched roofs of the native huts the blue smoke of wood fires rose in the clear air; and at night the moonlight made a radiant pathway across the dark lagoons.

A small square box lined with imperial yellow satin and containing a tiny silver sake cup incised with a crude plum-blossom came next. The admiral's face was stern as he remembered the last Korean king and his pleasant, courteous speech when he presented the little bowls as dinner souvenirs to the visiting American officers. “‘Uneasy

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lies the head that wears a crown !' His wasn't uneasy for very long after that," commented the admiral dryly, and picked up a Hawaiian coin.

"Won it at poker . . . from Kalakaua ! Always had to remind him 'ante up, king !' Those were the days !" smiled the admiral whimsically.

Then followed numerous mementos, conjuring up the memory of adventures on all the seven seas: a flint weather-charm that had guided the way through a blinding snow-storm in the devious Straits of Magellan; a long nail, bent into corkscrew-like spirals, told of a typhoon, with death and destruction in its wake, swooping across the Indian Ocean, when the ship had trembled like an exhausted horse; a primitive barbed and feathered hook recalled an interrupted fishing expedition off Herschel's Island, where the sudden hurricane had caught and nearly overpowered the small boat among mountainous waves, and the sea-birds, wild with fright, had driven helplessly down the icy wind.

A small stone Kwanyin brought memories of gunboat days and the stupendous love-

liness of the Yangtze valley. A piece of crude, mortuary, Ainu pottery told of a dangerous amateur excavating expedition under drifting cherry-blossom petals in northern Japan.

A thin scarlet card was the reminder of a presentation to the Dowager Empress in the Forbidden City—when that dominant lady had led the silent young Emperor about by the hand as though he were a bashful schoolboy.

A poisoned arrow-head told of uneasy days in the southern Philippines, where a molten, copper sun came up from behind the flaming fire-trees and showed the dense, tangled underbrush through which the Moro warriors crawled undetected to the water's edge. And at night, through the hot, muffling darkness, sounded the wistful, solitary piping of a reed flute. Blown by whom? And why?

Of a two years' tour of shore duty in Guam there was no souvenir, nor was one necessary. In the cemetery at remote Agaña was the grave of the admiral's only child . . . the wee daughter, whose tiny feet pattering unevenly on their short earthly pilgrimage still echoed across his heart and tightened his



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throat in a bitter memory of the futility of all available human skill. "If we had been where experienced doctors and specialists could have been called . . .?" his sick spirit reiterated, unsolaced by time's effacing touch.

Leisurely the admiral cleared the cabinet and stood looking silently at his trophies. Turning, he rang for his mess-attendant. "You can pack these, Pedro; they're the last things, I think," he said.

Through the open port-hole a boyish voice sounded clearly: "I don't know *what* to say! You can't congratulate an officer on reaching a birthday that puts him on the shelf . . . cuts him away, clean and sharp, from the work of a lifetime . . .," the voice trailed off. A knock sounded.

"Come in," called the admiral.

The ship's junior officers stood in the doorway, and a pleasant-faced ensign stepped forward. "Many happy birthdays to you, sir," he said shyly; "we knew we wouldn't get a chance later, so we came to tell you what an honor we consider it to have served on your flag-ship and how sorry we are that you are going to leave," he added.



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The admiral's face brightened. "This is thoughtful of you," he said, realizing the good-will behind their reticence. "The time comes to all of us . . . when we are towed into some landlocked backwater . . . and left there. It has to be—to make promotion."


The ensign spoke again. "We'd just as soon not be promoted if it means your going, sir," he said quickly, and the others murmured their agreement.

The admiral was pleased. "I'll be glad to remember that! And don't forget that I'll be watching your careers with interest," he said.

Pedro appeared at the stateroom door. "What uniform will you wear, sir?" he asked.

"Dress, with epaulets, cocked hat, sword, and white gloves," answered the admiral.

The junior officers left. The admiral went into his stateroom; for the last time he put on his uniform, buckled his sword-belt, took up his gloves, and went back into the cabin, where his aide and the captain of the ship were waiting for him. From outside the measured tramp of a thousand pairs of feet told that the crew were assembling on deck.



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A bugle sounded clear and high above the shrill crescendo of the boatswain's mate piping quarters.

The admiral, the captain, and the aide eyed each other with the inarticulate speechlessness of those who go down to the sea in ships, and each found comfort in the other's very apparent misery.

The admiral cleared his throat. "I've left everything in order, I think," he said; "you can turn those reports over to my relief . . . and the yeoman has typewritten copies of all letters. Come in!" he called.

"Officers and men up and aft, sir," announced the executive officer from the doorway.

The admiral buttoned his gloves, took up the envelope containing his orders, and, followed by the captain and aide, walked to the door. In the opening he paused a second for a glimpse of the last ceremonial of his long career . . . trying to print ineffaceably on his memory the scene before him.

On one side of the wide deck the marines curved in long khaki-colored lines; on the other side the sailors massed in a great blur

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of blue and white. Across the deck a row of officers, junior officers, and petty officers added the glint of brass buttons and gold braid. The gun's crew stood ready at their posts and, by the after-mast, a quartermaster held the halyards of the blue, two-starred admiral's flag in his hand. A curious stillness rested over the scene, broken, as the admiral stepped forward, by the bugle-call of "attention," and the officer of the deck's command: "Salute!"

The admiral returned the salute and walked across the deck to where the Stars and Stripes whipped sharply in the breeze and the shadow of the flag flickered across the white planking. Against the background of this symbol to which he had dedicated a lifetime of clean, arduous service, he stood facing the crew of his last command and unfolded his orders. His voice was clear and even:

"Office of the Secretary of the Navy,  
Navy Department,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

"SIR:

"On October 20, 1917, you will have attained the age of sixty-four (64) years, and will be transferred to the Retired List of Officers of the Navy, from that

date, in accordance with the provisions of Section 1444 of the Revised Statutes.

"On that date you will haul down your flag on board the U. S. S. *Idaho*; will regard yourself as detached from duty; will proceed to your home.

"(Signed) SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,"

read the admiral.

With the last word for a signal, the battery rang out in a salute of seventeen guns, and from the masthead the square flag started slowly on its downward journey. The admiral watched it with steady eyes; only the hand holding the folded orders trembled a little as the slackened rope ceased moving and the flag—*his* flag—dropped to the quartermaster's grasp.

Through the long lines of saluting officers, sailors, and marines he walked back to his cabin and disappeared through the narrow door, and, as he changed his uniform for civilian's clothes, he heard the tramp of the crew, the boastful call of the bugles, the shrill crescendo of the boatswain's mate's pipe, the commands of officers, and as eight bells sounded the band fared breezily into the opening bars of an antiquated comic-opera song.

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All the intimate, cheerful, unnoticed, everyday sights and sounds loomed large with intolerable loss as the admiral clumsily tied his detested necktie with groping, unaccustomed fingers. . . .

In the cabin his servants waited in a forlorn group to say good-by. He brushed aside a brusque wish to have the whole business hurried through, and responded with his habitual kindness; then rang the bell.

"Have my launch got ready—to take me ashore," he told the orderly.

"Your launch is at the gangway, sir," the answer came back.

The admiral hardly noticed the bustle outside as he turned and looked about the silent cabin, with its bare desk and table, to where, by the port-hole, the empty tasselled Chinese cage swung slowly in the offshore wind.

Blindly he walked away and passed out of the cabin door. Across the deck the ship's officers waited, feigning a cheerfulness they did not feel. The air was full of their volubly reiterated good wishes, but several faces were missing.

The admiral hesitated. "Chalmers? Mor-

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ton? Rees?" he inquired as he went toward the gangway ladder. One glance at the waiting barge answered his question. A pulling-boat, manned by officers, waited to take him ashore, and as he climbed to his seat in the stern the sailors, heedless of half-appeased appetites, gathered on the forecastle and in the starboard gangway and cheered until the echoes answered back the admiral's name. And when the pulling-boat had landed him, and the last good-by was spoken, he stood, a solitary figure on the dock end, and looked at the receding boat-load of officers and the gray ship, with her grim, bristling guns, lifting her lacelike cage masts across the blue sky as she rode easily between her anchor chains.

A fine ship, the flag-ship! His, no more.

At the hotel his wife, awaiting him, felt the sharp sting of tears as she noted the forlorn droop of his shoulders, but she smiled as he saluted her deferentially. "I have to report that I am permanently at your service," he said with impressive formality.

"Thank goodness you've come, John!" she said briskly. "I want you to go to the





The air was full of their volubly reiterated good wishes.



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## The Admiral's Birthday 45

Pullman office and make a reservation on this evening's train while I telegraph Marian. I couldn't make any final arrangements, because I didn't know when you would get back. And will you get some one to fix the lock on my brown trunk? You'll have to hurry!" she added energetically.

The admiral gasped. "Reservations—for where?" he asked.

"Silver City, of course! That's the nearest station to the Cliffords' ranch. They have a lovely young horse for you to train—one that no one has ever tried to ride on before. Marian says she'll guarantee that animal to distract your mind from your . . . she says you'll *have* to keep your mind on the horse. They have a wonderful ranch—with all sorts of wild animals, you know."

"I rather wanted to stay around here—until the ship left," ventured the admiral, but his smile deepened. "I've weathered a good deal . . . to finally end my career on a bucking bronco! Couldn't Marian and you have picked out a less strenuous counter-irritant for me? Why, Caroline!"

The admiral's wife was crying quietly.

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"I *won't have* you wandering around the pier, looking like a lost soul and grieving about that ship," she sobbed. "I'm sorry you feel badly about it but oh! how glad and thankful I am that at last you've come home!" said the admiral's wife.

### III

## BETWEEN THE TREATY PORTS

I NEVER see my waitress spreading the embroidered cloth I bought in Hong-Kong but the whole occurrence comes back to me, together with the remembrance of the sights and sounds of that hot May day.

The table-cloth—folded into a neat bundle—was under my arm as I stepped from the cool embroidery-shop into the blinding glare of Queen's Road. My head ached and I would never have joined the crowd gathered about some itinerant jugglers if it had not been for a charmingly dressed woman, accompanied by a Chinese servant, who stood watching them.

After fifteen months of following my husband's ship up and down the Asiatic station, my wardrobe had reached the state where it was wise, when possible, to ignore it; and the sight of such a dress as that woman wore was, at first, more of an attraction than the

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juggling. And, upon closer inspection, I decided that she justified the gown, for she was very lovely.

She hesitated, then smiling back at me motioned toward the jugglers. "The cleverest I've ever seen—they're really worth watching," she said.

They were. Soon I was completely engrossed by their remarkable achievements.

A rose-tree sprouted, grew, and blossomed in the middle of the street. A stork emerged from an egg, flourished, and flew away. The basket trick held us—loitering ricksha coolies, Englishmen, Chinese gentlemen, and a few women—absorbed in the glaring noonday sunshine, while my new acquaintance and I admired and wondered and her Chinese servant watched us with black, unblinking eyes.

There came a pause. The older juggler passed a small basket among his audience and, dissatisfied, handed it round a second time. The money was counted and divided.

I remembered my headache and thought of the cool hotel. "They seem to have finished," I said.

"No," she answered, "I rather think the



best is coming. They're passing that basket again! I'll give them enough to hurry them."

She dropped a bill into the juggler's hand, and spoke sharply to him in Chinese.

"How splendid to be able to speak this difficult language!" I said admiringly.

She smiled. "It's easy to pick up—when you don't hear anything else for months at a time," she answered, and added: "You're an American, aren't you?"

I nodded.

"I haven't spoken to an American woman in years," she commented, and to my exclamation, "But you're an American, too!" she gave an unwilling "Yes."

"Look!" she cried hastily; "I thought so! They are going to do the rope trick."

I gasped. Already the two men were above our heads, climbing, hand over hand, up the rope that they had thrown into the air where, straight and taut, it stretched above them. Steadily they ascended, their arms and legs moving with automatic regularity; soon they were noticeably smaller, as on and on they went, up and up, higher and higher, then paused and stopped.

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Far above us they hung motionless for a perceptible time, looking down with unwavering scrutiny on the crowd below; then upward again, until they dwindled to tiny dots—and disappeared.

I moved my head stiffly about to ease the cramp in my neck.

"I can hear myself trying to explain this," I commented. "Every one will say that we were hypnotized. I've heard of this trick and how a photograph only shows a blank place where the jugglers should be."

"Can a hypnotized person take reliable photographs?" she asked, and turned to the servant. "You hypnotized, Et-san?" she questioned.

The servant shook her head, her eyes on my face.

"I wonder—*what they saw*—when they stopped and looked back," mused the mistress.

"Maybe they were wondering if we had enough money left to make a return trip profitable," I ventured flippantly.

She did not seem to hear me.

"I've often thought—how fine it would

be—to get high enough above the fret and muddle of every-day living—and see what really is large,” said the woman, while bitterness grew in her quiet voice.

The crowd had melted away; we stood alone beside the narrow street, and I was conscious that looking up toward the sun was not a cure for headache. The hotel seemed far away.

“I must go,” I said, motioning to a ricksha coolie. “I’ll see you again,” I called back.

She smiled and nodded. Then, to my amazement, the Chinese servant spoke.

“Ye-es. Ple-ase! Goo-by,” she cried, as I rode away.

Late that afternoon I, half-awakened from the deep sleep induced by the remedies that had routed my headache, lay stupidly listening to a partially comprehended murmur of voices from the screened porch almost outside my window; the big suite, next to my room, had evidently just been taken.

A woman’s voice sounded. “I’ve gone over and over this, Jim,” she said with a tired sigh. “You know that I love you, and



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that this separation will be almost more than I can bear. I dare not *think* of the days ahead for *fear* I won't have the courage to let you go. But you've been out here for two years, seeing nothing but frumpy women—of course, I seem attractive compared with them!

"Things in England may have changed—go home and see! If, after you've seen, you cable for me, I'll go to you—the happiest woman in the world. But I don't want happiness that doesn't belong to me fairly."

She paused; and, as no answer came, went on.

"I believe you love me, and that our separation will be a short one," she said gently; "but when you tell me that we can be married in Yokohama, and that no one in England will ever question who I was—if I hail from a remote enough place in America—I know better and so do you!

"Some one from San Francisco would meet me again. First, there would be a whisper; then people would stop seeing us and asking us to parties, and would forget to call. Then, if we stood our punishment meekly for two or three years, and behaved

in a chastened way, your relatives would invite us to small dinners with carefully selected guests who 'wouldn't mind meeting us'!

"Could you stand those probationary years—alone with me?"

"You've never been cut or had to take second place—and you'd hate and resent it. I *want* to trust you, Jim, but I know how changeable you are!"

"At first you'd be defiant and independent—but after a while you'd begin to think that all your life—the things you have longed for during your stay out here—was spoiled because of me. And when people asked you, without me, you'd go!"

"You needn't get angry. You have too much money—too great a position—for women not to run after you. The world is full of women who are fearfully agile in a case like *ours*."

A man's voice, sharp with exasperation, answered: "By Jove! if any one had told me that I'd not only ask, but beg, a woman to marry me—a woman who had—a woman I didn't have to—well! a woman who lived by her wits in a Chinese city, I'd jolly well

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have smashed their head," he said. "Here I offer you everything. I care enough for you that I *can't help* offering them. What do you want, anyhow?

"You'd love the English places, Maizie! Big houses, sloping lawns, great trees, and the old flower-gardens—a blaze of color against the walls and hedges."

She interrupted him sharply.

"Yes, and when our great-grandson showed visitors around the picture-gallery he'd get them past my portrait as quickly as possible! Can't you *see* him?" Her voice rose. "I won't spoil your beautiful future, Jim! I can bear staying here until you really know your mind; but if I went with you now, and you tired of me, and filled your life with things that left me out, and stopped caring for me——"

His voice was sulky. "I won't admit that I could stop caring for you. I've tried hard enough! For days after you told me that you'd lived with a Chinaman—I swore I'd never see you again. But I can't help myself—and if I should? You'd have three topping houses, and position and money——"



"My house and position here suit me," said the woman dryly. "As for money—I have more than I can possibly spend. Look at my pearls—these are only part of them! My clothes come from Paris; my bronzes, paintings, and porcelains are finer than the viceroy's; and the money that bought them I made by my own efforts."

"Yes—but how?" he muttered.

"Honestly!" she answered with sharp defiance. "No one has ever tried to say that I wasn't honest. And I can't begin to spend all I earn—it *rolls* in!"

"You talk like an idiot," said the man roughly. "Either you can't or won't understand what I'm offering you. If I'm willing to take my chances with the future, you ought to be."

His voice changed.\* "Be reasonable, Maizie! I can't understand you, but I know that you're too fine to be hurt by apparent circumstances here. I love you because of qualities I realize you have—and can't describe. If you only knew how I've pictured you in my house—and coming along the garden walks. I'm thankful that my term

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of duty here is over so that I can take you away."

There was a sound of muffled sobbing.

"Don't cry, Maizie. This time to-morrow we'll have sailed. Et-san can send your things after you. We'll wait for them in Japan and go home by the Trans-Siberian," he said.

"No," answered the woman unevenly; "don't try to make me change my mind. But if you send for me I'll come."

"You'll never get the chance," said the man with grim emphasis. "Why do you want to stay behind? Is there some one else here? I might have guessed it!" he added with sudden suspicion.

She answered with spirit, "You know that's not true!" while exasperation grew in her voice. "*Can't* you understand what I'm trying to save you from? Go back among your own people—your mother, your sisters—get a perspective on me, on my life; then, if you still love me, say so."

The man's voice was ugly with jealousy.


"Of course there's some one else! I've been a fool," he said.

"Don't, Jim," pleaded the woman. "I'm

trying to do right by you—to the best of my judgment—” Her voice broke in a sob. “If I only *knew*! To-day on Queen’s Road I saw some jugglers do the rope trick. When they were high in the air they stopped and looked back at us, and I wished with all my heart that I could get far enough away from the muddle of my life to see what is *really* large. I’ve made so many mistakes. I’ve been so bitterly unhappy. Your home, the peace and security of the life you offer me, seem like heaven! But they must be heaven for you, too. I must be sure! *What was that?*” she whispered.

“Some one in the next room,” answered the man coldly, as I, aghast at my eaves-dropping, hastily pulled down the window.

The Asiatic squadron cruised unapproachably along the Korean coast that summer, while I, not being able to follow them, spent the hot weather in the mountains of Japan. October found me in Hong-Kong again—en route for the Philippines, where the battle-cruisers were already engaged in the autumn target-practice.



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"There won't be a passenger-steamer to Manila for six days," the agent told me, and, the thirst for Oriental sightseeing still waxing strong, I left directions for my mail to be forwarded in care of the American consul and went up the river to "see Canton."

"What are the most typical Chinese sights?" I asked the consul when I went for my letters.

He suggested various temples and the nine-storied pagoda.

"This *isn't* my first native city. I spent last spring in the Yangtze valley," I reminded him.

"The feather-jewelry makers," volunteered the consul, mentally searching for novelties.

"I want to see a collection of porcelains, or an old garden, or an official's yamen," I admitted modestly.

The consul ran his hand through his hair. "The sophisticated tourist—heaven help me!" he said, and hesitated. "I don't know why not—now," he mused.

"How would you like to see an A-number-one gambling-house—that is a palace?" he asked.


"Why—yes," I agreed, without enthusiasm.

The consul was nettled. "Hundreds of people would jump at the chance," he said shortly. "If you had come a month earlier—or later—you couldn't get in for love or money, and neither could I! No foreigner was welcome, but Americans were absolutely debarred. There's been a murder there; I have to go officially to inventory some things and to question the servants again."

"Why didn't they want Americans?" I asked with resentment.

The consul shook his head. "I never knew," he said. "I tried going there when I first came here—took a party of tourists one afternoon—Americans of importance they were. Well, say! It wasn't necessary to *order* us out; those people fairly fell over each other getting away, and the principal tourist said he wouldn't have gone for a thousand dollars—if he'd known! He seemed pretty upset and inclined to be snappy," commented the consul.

"Didn't you tell them that they were going to a gambling-house? Perhaps it recalled





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unpleasant experiences at home; I've read of several voluntarily nomadic careers caused by the investigators," I said, smothering a yawn.

"Maybe so," ruminated the consul dubiously.

"Anyhow, unless I can get a clew or pick a flaw in one of the servant's stories, I'll have to turn the place over to the old woman mentioned in the will. The interpreter and I are going there now; you can come if you like. The place is worth seeing," added the consul.

Conversation between ricksha passengers in a crowded Chinese city is impossible, so I succumbed uninterruptedly to the fascinations of color, outline, and sound as we jogged along the narrow streets with their enticing open shops and swinging, vivid, scarlet and gold sign-boards, or passed the incense-haunted stones of temple compounds, over which the great bell's reverberations echoed ceaselessly; but I evidently showed my disappointment when we drew up before a narrow door in the long blank wall.

The consul laughed. "Don't judge a


Chinese palace by the hole that you get into it by," he advised, and knocked with vigor.

The gate opened silently and closed with uncanny quickness behind us. Ahead a white, marble-paved courtyard ended in the vermilion lacquer of a great door. Above rose a confusion of massive, curving eaves, on which bronze dragons writhed and twisted. Only the shrieks of coolies and venders in the street outside echoed across the brooding stillness and stirred the glossy leaves of the tall, blossoming gardenia hedges, while from his perch by the steps a gaudy tethered macaw blinked solemnly in the heavy sunshine.

"Oh!" I cried with fervor. "I wouldn't have missed this for anything."

The lacquered door swung ponderously back; several servants appeared. We went down a wide hallway paved with marble to where a heavy carved screen shielded a doorway. The consul spoke to an official stationed there and beckoned us into the great apartment beyond.

"Allee same-ee gammel-ing-room," announced the interpreter.



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"How beautiful!" I cried with enthusiasm.

The room was panelled in soft fawn-colored wood that shone like dull velvet between brocade-mounted paintings by masters of the T'ang and Sung dynasties. Bronze incense-burners and sacrificial wine-jugs alternated with monochrome bowls on the old lacquered chests and cabinets. Long strips of mellow embroideries framed the windows and repeated the color of the great sheaves of lemon lilies and feathery *cremurus* massed in high jars on the wide sills. Only the long, bare teakwood table made a discordant note.

The consul nodded. "You'd know that a person who could own and run a place like this would be a mark for some one! One of the servants must have done it, but I can't catch them in a single misstatement. The interpreter will question them again to-day. And we have to verify the list of these antiques—they are willed to a man in England. Do you want to walk through the place while we are busy? And if you see an old Chinese woman servant ask her a few questions. She's the one to whom the place is left—and I think she's the guilty person!

She looks it—but sticks to her story,” complained the consul.

I hesitated. “You spoke of a murder. Where is the—body?” I asked.

“Buried—two weeks ago,” stated the consul, and turned to the interpreter.

Like all old Chinese palaces this was on one floor; behind the large room smaller rooms, furnished with magnificent antiques, large bare tables, and heavy chairs, opened on a long, wide hall that ended at a massive door hinged and studded with copper. It was locked.

I knocked, waited, and knocked again, feeling all the time that some one, unseen, was watching me. Then came a little sharp whisper of surprise and the sound of a heavy bolt being slipped back. The door opened and a Chinese woman stood against the light from windows beyond.

I felt abashed and apologetic. “I’m so interested—may I see these rooms?” I faltered.

The woman nodded, and stood aside to let me through the nearest door into a small library furnished with simple chintz-covered

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furniture. Around the walls the book-filled shelves rose to the ceiling, and the overflow was piled on desk and tables. Psychologists, philosophers, realists—peopling an entire world of books. *And all in English!*

The dining-room came next; then a tiny bedroom, bare as a cell, with its clean, painted walls and floor.

The Chinese woman had followed me and, as I looked up from the puzzling effort of forming a mental picture of the dead owner of this amazing house, I found her black, unwavering eyes fixed on my face.

Where had I seen her before?

As if in reply to my unspoken question she opened the door of a closet behind her and beckoned to me. I followed her, and there, first in the orderly row of garments, hung the lovely, unforgotten gray dress of my admiration on that May day in Hong-Kong!

"Why, yes!" I cried. "And you—your name is Et-san! I remember, because it was the first Chinese woman's name that I had ever heard! And your mistress—where is she?"

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For answer she hid her face against her arm, while the difficult tears of an unweeping race stained the sleeve of her blue linen coat.

The consul's voice sounded in the distance.

"There really isn't much that *I* can do," he complained in loud discontent.

Quickly the Chinese woman lowered her arm and, turning, opened a narrow drawer. From beneath the neat piles of gloves she took a small book, bound in limp leather, and put it into my hand.

"You take—keep—allege time," she whispered. "My missee—talk and laugh—*with you!* Very lone-lee and sad—my missee. You keep!"

The book was under my arm when the consul came into the room and glanced at the open door.

"Now isn't that like a woman! Comes to see a Chinese palace and ends up at a closet full of French dresses," he said with disgust, and turned to the servant.

"I'll never believe you hadn't a hand in this murder—but I can't prove it," he said severely.

She did not answer.

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"I suppose the steward and you will try to go on running this establishment—juggle it around between you?" asked the consul.

She gave me a startled glance. "I—no can—juggle," she answered sharply. Then, as we turned and passed out, she bowed, her eyes, heavy with tears, fixed on my face. "Goo-by," said Et-san, with a little sob.

Hardly waiting for the door to be closed behind us, I faced the consul and voiced my bewilderment.

"You said that this was a Chinese gambling-house—what is the American woman who wears those dresses doing here?" I demanded.

The consul seemed surprised. "*Doing here?* Nothing—at present!" he answered with dry emphasis. "When she *was here* she ran this gambling-house," he added.

I caught my breath. "'*Was here*'? What do you mean?" I asked sharply.

"She's dead—murdered, *I think*," answered the consul.

"But how did she get here?" I questioned abruptly.

We had reached the door of the large gam-

bling-room and stood looking in. The heavy scent of the lilies blended suddenly with the waves of noise from the street outside, and the consul raised his voice to answer.

"She came here, eight or ten years ago, with a rich old Chinaman who had made his pile in San Francisco. He left her this place when he died," said the consul with a reminiscent attention to details. "She was the prettiest woman I have ever seen—but hard as iron and cold as a stone! I tried once to ask her a few friendly, personal questions. She never answered; just looked at me and, after I'd repeated the questions a couple of times, I realized that she wanted me to mind my own business," asserted the consul with grieved amazement.

"But a young American woman! How *could* she run this gambling-house alone?" I cried.

The consul pointed toward the long table. "She sat at one end of that—a revolver in reach of each hand! When any one tried to cheat or argue—! Only rich Chinese were admitted. Of course I don't approve of gambling," said the consul virtuously, "but if



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an American is going to do a thing I like it done like this!"

"Why do you think she was murdered by the servants?" I asked, remembering Et-san's mute misery.

The consul was instantly belligerent. "She was shot with one of her own gambling-table revolvers," he said. "The servants say it was still in her hand when they found her. But she came to me a while ago about her will—left everything to that servant you were talking to! You'll never get me to believe that the old woman didn't know that she'd profit by getting her mistress out of the way," asserted the consul with irritable emphasis as he made for the door.

In the courtyard the interpreter stopped us. "Mail come—England side. One piece—for dead missee," he said, holding up a letter with a London postmark and the address "United Service Club" on opposite corners.

The consul glanced at it. "Take that to the British consul and have him return it to the sender," he ordered.

But he did not notice the little book held



"She sat at one end of that—a revolver in reach of each hand! When any one tried to cheat or argue—!"

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1

close under my arm because, as we went through the narrow entrance, we found the street blocked by a dense crowd, and the consul, returning from a protracted view of the cause of the congestion, urged me to stop and watch the performance.

"Some wandering jugglers—the best I've ever seen! You shouldn't miss them," he declared with enthusiasm. But I, pleading a proclivity for headache, refused, and left him standing enthralled, while above his head the jugglers, hand over hand, started on the initial stage of their unexplainable achievement—the rope trick.

I have it yet—the little book, holding on its small pages the records of quaint, preposterous transactions—procedures filled with so guileful an ingenuousness that they leave you divided between amazement and amusement. Business transactions; itemized lists of bribery and "squeeze" moneys paid to the dignitaries of the district—all the great names of the province flaunted across the narrow pages.

And also, in scattered, isolated paragraphs, it holds the meagre history of a soul's growth

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from the days when comfort and leisure were sufficient, to the hour when, through suffering, her dazed mind came at last face to face with its ordeal and cowered unreasoningly before the engulfing loneliness of the years that stretched ahead.

The first entry was made seven years ago.

Cheong-li died to-day.

April, 1910.

How curious it is that what seemed the final step of my downfall is to end in wealth, leisure, and independence! I am to take over, and run, this gambling-house for myself. Cheong-li secured it to me months ago. I am unspeakably grateful to him.

I am ordering books, and books, and books!

January, 1911.

I wonder if my mother ever thinks of me? My cheap, silly mother! All my life, as a child, was spent with servants, while my mother went from luncheons to bridge parties, from dinners to the theatre. Anything—anywhere—that could keep her from her real duties at home, and stand between her and one moment of honest self-communion; and always bills—and lack of money.

Only when I—a young, inexperienced girl—attracted the admiration of a man who was entirely unsuitable in every way but a financial one, did she ever show any interest in me.

And after the inevitable crash I never thought of

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appealing to her. How could I *expect* her to understand my running away from a man who could provide me with automobiles and money to spend on all sorts of amusements? How preposterous she must have considered me in objecting to *his* diversions when *I* was so amply provided for!

December, 1912.

The Viceroy entertained a party here last evening. I was notified that he would honor my establishment and a room was made ready. The Viceroy's losings were small; but his friends, among them, parted with three thousand taels.

Early this morning a coolie came, bringing a carefully worded message which, when deciphered by my steward, disclosed the Viceroy's unabashed request for the money his friends had "accidentally left behind."

Added to this my diplomatic steward advised me to contribute an extra thousand as a mark of appreciation for the honor shown me by his excellency.

And yet they say China is carelessly governed! I am glad that there is only one Viceroy allowed to each province.

May, 1913.

The steward was right. What might have been a serious blow to us was averted by the Viceroy's intervention.

. . . . .

It is pleasant to feel that when you shut a door no one *has a right* to open it.

But why is it that success is so disappointing? For

the first time in my life I can do as I like; I have hundreds of books; more money than I can use. And now I find it tiresome to read or spend! Et-san lectures daily on my need of new dresses.

February, 1914.

Books are cheerless things; when I read I am increasingly disillusioned. All of them tell you of mistakes and their bitter aftermath—but *not* of a better ordering of life and the avoidance of errors.

And for life's achievement I find in them but two ideals: The dash for the open sea—The Great Adventure! Or the peace of a landlocked harbor.

I will not have either.

November, 1914.

I have never known affection; it must be a warm and comforting thing to gather close to you. The shadow of a great rock——

I have only known love.

November, 1914.

Was it even *love* that I knew?

May, 1915.

Without asking permission that blundering American consul brought a crowd of tourists here to-day; it was in the afternoon and the unsuspecting gate-coolie let them in. My ex-husband and his newest wife were in the party and their embarrassment was diverting; but such a thing must not happen again.

June, 1915.

If I could live my life over I would not leave my husband. Youth finds unfaithfulness and disillusion

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intolerable—while experience is only amazed that it could be deceived again—and laughs at its own credulity.

July, 1915.

All life—excepting that of civilized man and a few animals temporarily domesticated for his use—ends in tragedy. The day that the most ferocious lion passes the zenith of his strength he goes down before some stronger animal; the lack of humanity with which a savage treats a wounded or stricken comrade has always been a matter for criticism among observant travellers.

Outside of civilization nothing dies a natural death.

But who is wise enough to know just where civilization begins—and ends?

November, 1915.

Englishmen are, of all men, the most amused, interested, and attracted by that quality in a woman which they call pluck.

My running this gambling-house has struck one of them as an amazingly sporting proposition.

April, 1916.


Never before has it been as lovely here as it is this spring. I neither read nor write.

June, 1916.

Jim sailed for England yesterday.

July, 1916.

I've been fretting because I am idle, To-day I arranged with workmen for designs for a large wing. I ordered some dresses from Paris—saw an old painting that Huang has for sale.





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July, 1916.

Of all cheats love is the worst! *What is it?* Can you see, or touch, or hear it? And the pitiful, futile gains of love, what are they? The intonation of a voice—a smile—a whispered word! For these *veriest* trifles we forget all else, to gather, as a reward for our pursuit, a dull ache of heart and mind—and nothing else!

August, 1916.

*I did* expect you to write—but the mails have come in from Shanghai, Kobe, Yokohama, Darien, and London—many times. I know, now, that I never expected you to take me at my word. I overestimated my power over you by immeasurable miles.

Knowing you as I did, Jim, I am infuriated that I cannot rid myself of this degrading sense of loss. Already, no doubt, you are wondering at your amazing recklessness, and thanking your patron saint that I hadn't sense enough to take advantage of my opportunities.

Truly—a man loses his idea of proportion in the Orient—is it not so, Jim?

. . . . .

How pleasant a belief in idols must be! One could beat their fists against the pedestals of bronze or stone or lacquer gods and be greatly comforted thereby!

I know that the ruin of my life is of my own making—and I can neither implore—nor blame.

. . . . .

Did you ever picture to yourself my life here, Jim? Even with high walls, I can never forget that I am in



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the centre of a Chinese city, and the noise of it beats like a monstrous pulse through all the hours of my day. Sometimes it is the shrieks of venders—the shrill command of a mandarin's bearers and coolies clearing the way before his chair—the wail of hired mourners in a funeral procession—the hopeless call of men staggering under crushing loads; and above it all the echoing boom of the temple-bell, and the clanging crash of the priest's cymbals—shattering the heavy air like splintering glass——

At night—before me, around me—the monotony of clicking dice—the hideous wasp-like whirring of the wheel——

*I am so tired.* I long for deep quiet—and never find it. *How* can I bear the long years—that stretch ahead?

. . . . .

August, 1916.

You will never know how near to yielding I was, when you spoke of your English gardens! Only by pulling you away from the subject could I go on.

I can see them now! Daffodils and hyacinth, lilacs, and iris—yellow and purple, against the old gray walls. Shady rock-gardens, with maidenhair ferns; hovering butterflies and blue larkspur; darting dragon-flies; the drowsy hum of bees; the cold, sweet fragrance of Madonna lilies, ghostlike in the moonlight; the white sweep of rain scattering the roses. And larks—singing of endless summers—for how are they to guess that summer is soon over?

I never wanted your houses or money—but most deeply I longed for your gardens.

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August, 1916.

Why, if money is so easily plentiful to me, do I not buy and enjoy an English garden?

Because, even to myself, I am a liar!

The flowers would be just a background *for you*; the old walks a pathway bringing you back to me. I am *hungry* for the sight of your face and the sound of your voice.

September, 1916.

Poor old Et-san cannot understand why I spend no more week-ends in Hong-Kong. She assures me that the steward manages well in my absence, and tries to bribe me by promises of chance meetings with a pleasant American woman I talked with. And in the back of her stumbling, devious mind Et-san blames the change to the machinations of some jugglers we saw—that day.

. . . . .

The Chinese are the greatest gamblers in the world; but when Cheong-li and I started this place I made the rigid law that no one should be allowed to play who could not afford to lose. And I really believed that such a rule could be applied and enforced!

Now I look with sick distaste at my paintings, my clothes, and my books. They are *mine*—but at what cost to some spendthrift who, perhaps, stumbled blindly through my door—into the night.

September, 1916.

At dawn this morning, when the last table was cleared and I had dragged myself to my room, I sat

## Between the Treaty Ports 77

by the window and watched the light slowly grow in the sky behind the hillside pagoda—and realized quite suddenly and clearly that I need not go any farther.

How stupid—how unbelievably stupid I have been, not to know—that I need not suffer, or go groping on——

Every night, I have sat with the keys to my deliverance at my hand—and never noticed! It is too funny!

I laughed—until Et-san awakened, and scurried in to look at me.

September, 1916.

I have put my house in order to-day, with the making of my will; but I cannot think of any way by which I could give people back their money. Perhaps the bitterest thought connected with such money is that I do not know whom I may have taken it from.

October, 1916.

I wonder if any one else facing their last day of life was ever as ludicrous as I?

To the end I am a predestined daughter of havoc, and this day, which should be given up to great deeds and thoughts, is sliding by, punctuated by the usual small annoyances. Et-san—poor old soul—irritates me by hovering about. And never before have the street venders shrieked so unceasingly—or the scent of the gardenias seemed so deadly sweet——

. . . . .

I have juggled with life and happiness—and lost,

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When the game is over who cares to sit and look at the clean-swept table?

. . . . .

Will it be cold? Will I suffer? Can I look back? I should like it to be very still, and then—*never any more* to think or feel.

This was the last entry.

And so, when I see my waitress spread the embroidered table-cloth, I find myself remembering that hot day in Hong-Kong and the jugglers who looked back.

"It oughtn't to be possible for folks who have brains to waste their lives on things like this—to be used so commonlike—" says Janet, with grim Scotch-Presbyterian disapproval, as she smooths the cloth into place.

"Maybe they are forced to—by circumstances," I suggest.

But Janet, with a snort of righteous unbelief, relegates circumstances to the increasingly large company of conditions about which she has no curiosity.

I am not so sensible. I shall always wonder—*what was in that letter the consul sent back?*

## IV

### ORDERS

CAPTAIN FRANK WINDSOR, U. S. Navy, paused outside the hospital entrance and looked up toward the third window in the left wing. It was the window of his wife's room; he knew it well. For months now he had paid a daily visit that was the bright spot at the end of her dragging afternoons. All the gossip of their service friends, of the department, of the war-time shifting of officers, he stored up to tell her when, after finishing his day's work, he stopped for the visit that was strictly limited in length by the attending specialists.

To-day was different. Luncheon was barely over; they were to have the whole afternoon together—a war-time holiday! Captain Windsor, straightening his shoulders, heard the rustle of newly folded paper in his pocket as he mounted the steps and entered the hospital.


On the landing an interne, hurrying past, smiled a casual greeting: "You're early!" he commented. At the door of Mrs. Windsor's room her nurse, evidently waiting for him, answered his questions evenly: "Yes, the doctor told me. . . . No, he doesn't think it can make any difference. . . . Yes, she expects you. . . . No, we haven't told her," and added: "I'll be right at the desk if you want me. I won't come unless you ring."

Captain Windsor knocked, and opened the door. His wife lay, as he so often found her, watching the flickering folds of a big American flag on the flag-staff of the opposite building. She turned at his entrance to smile her usual greeting, and her husband, noticing her lace boudoir-cap with its ribbon roses, her bed-jacket with its shining bows, spoke briskly: "My! How dressed up we are! Never saw so much pink-satin ribbon at once before!" He leaned to kiss her. "How well you look! We'll have you climbing lamp-posts before you know it!" He laid the square box he carried on the coverlet.

She smiled contentedly, her hands busy with the package. "I do feel better," she

agreed, and added: "Lilies-of-the-valley—the dears! This *is* a real party! It's a long time since you had a holiday. How did you get this half-day off? When I'm well let's go on a month's leave and not ask what things cost or care what we spend—a regular navy spree!" She laughed anticipatively. "We've had all sorts of good times in all kinds of queer places . . . but always with the dread of orders hanging over us. *Orders!* My whole navy life has pivoted around that word . . . for fear, when the orders came, they'd send you somewhere that I couldn't follow the ship and be with you in port. But after all, we haven't been separated much, and we've been so happy! Tell me: Which place do you remember most pleasantly? Where did you have the best time?"

The captain did not answer. Mrs. Windsor, seeming not to notice, went gayly on: "What nice holidays we've had, Frank! Do you remember our honeymoon in Quebec—the old French city under the hill, the queer carriages with the big springs, the quiet churches? I wonder if it has changed much in twenty-five years?"





Captain Windsor smiled reminiscently. "Not much, I don't believe. When you're well we'll go back and see, and *this time* I'll buy you whatever you want! How I hated to refuse you the little ermine collar you liked—but I was afraid that if I bought it I wouldn't have enough money to pay our hotel bill. Even in those days an ensign's pay was small to marry on. I've often thought of that little neckpiece and hated to remember that you wanted it, and I had to refuse."

She broke in, laughing: "If I had had the sense I was born with I should have realized how foolish that little string of fur would look without the muff to match! But even *my* foolishness didn't lead me to covet an ermine muff! We weren't so wise at Annapolis!"

They laughed together. "I was quite impressed by my job of junior instructor at the Naval Academy; when you told me that you just couldn't receive callers in your bedroom at our boarding-house—'no one at your home ever entertained visitors in a *regular* bedroom'—I felt that you were perfectly justified in

your demand. We figured up that we couldn't afford a sitting-room; but what did we pay for that folding-bed?"

Mrs. Windsor sobered. "Eighty-nine dollars! And after we'd left the store we suddenly remembered that we hadn't even counted up what our board bill for the month would be. I was perfectly miserable, and bitterly conscious of being a matrimonial failure when you turned accusingly and asked me: 'Didn't it occur to you that we'd have to eat?' I thought you were cruel!" affirmed Mrs. Windsor.

"I was a brute!" agreed her husband; "I didn't realize what a fruitful topic of conversation it was going to be. Folding-beds were a novelty then; we showed every caller how ours worked!" Both of them laughed; the captain continued thoughtfully: "You've been wonderful, Beth. Never, since those first years, have you let me feel that you wanted things that I couldn't give you; you've adapted your needs to fit my pay. Do you recall the December that I had been plaguing you to tell me what you'd like for Christmas, and you finally chose a sewing-

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machine? Old Rice was staying with us, and when he saw it he remarked: 'What a nice useful present! Give her a wash-board and tub, next year!' What is it, dear? Shall I call the nurse?"

Mrs. Windsor shook her head. . . . "All right . . . in a second" . . . she whispered, and added: " . . . No nurses . . . wanted . . . to spoil . . . our holiday. . . . Besides, the pain is . . . much less . . . than it has been. It acts . . . as though it had grown . . . discouraged, and was leaving" . . . she smiled reassuringly. "What *awful* Christmases we have spent! Do you remember the one aboard that quarantined liner, at the disinfecting docks in Honolulu harbor? And the holiday hula dance those rich tourists invited us to see? I didn't dare glance toward you when the dancers, clad in grass skirts and carnation anklets, pranced in! I never realized before just how much money *would* buy!"

"When I think of the diseases we've had a chance at, and didn't catch, I believe we were born to be hanged," commented her husband. "Black smallpox up the Yangtze—I was frightened about you! It was bad

enough aboard ship, without worrying over the risks you were running in those Chinese cities!"

"I loved all of those cities!" asserted Mrs. Windsor slowly. "Sometimes, when I'm suffering a good deal, it has helped me to think of those colorful days—Kiukiang, with her grass-grown city wall, crumbling pagoda, and wide river across the valley floor; the ruined courtyards and palaces, the irregular stairs to the hilltop shrines, the willow road to Purple Mountain at Nanking; the lapis-colored tiles and marble pavements, the laden camels swinging along through a haze of golden dust, the vermilion-lacquered temples set in bitter-cold, blue-white snow at Peking; and over all the daily life the slow booming of temple-bells, the movement and color . . . come back to comfort me for these . . . gray days." She paused, then hurried on: "Will you ever forget that dreadful, parlorless hotel at Hankow, and the English naval officer and his wife who came to call, late in the afternoon? I felt internationally disgraced when one of the hotel servants came and took away all our chairs to use around the supper-table!"

Captain Windsor laughed. "Funny how youth magnifies trifles; now I can't even recall that officer's name."

Mrs. Windsor, holding her breath, turned painfully on her side. "I haven't forgotten a detail of my solitary holiday visit to the Ming tombs," she said. "I had come back filled with a sort of reverent awe of the wide, lovely valley, the colossal granite animals bordering miles of avenue to the tomb, with its golden-yellow imperial tiles all gleaming in the slant sunshine of late afternoon right into the midst of a howling, antiforeign mob of Chinese. They had hung one missionary—a woman—in an archway of the city gate. I had never before known blank fear until the moment the mob turned on me and stones began to fall. But when that detachment of soldiers, each holding a long spear straight out in front of him, suddenly appeared around a bend in the road and charged into the rioters— Well, every person has a right to imagine how they prefer angels to look! I'll take mine Manchus," asserted Mrs. Windsor.

Her husband nodded. "That was the



year Old Rice, on a dare, rode his high-wheeled American bicycle on the top of the wall around the Forbidden City; all the palace guards, thinking that the devil was arriving, threw away their arms and, lying down, covered their faces. By the way, Beth, I had a letter from Old Rice to-day. It was headed 'At a famous château,' and he told how the American engineers had patched up the old place with corrugated iron and Georgia pine—'effectual, but *not* picturesque.' Rice said: 'All around it are the graves of American Marines, many of whom went directly to France from Haiti, without even a chance to go home and say good-by.'"

Captain Windsor hesitated, then went on: "Old Rice is with the sailors who are using the big navy guns, mounted on railroad-cars, for bombarding. Fine job, Beth!" His voice was enthusiastically considerate.

She raised a silencing hand. "We're talking about holidays and play; not war and work," she reminded him, and added: "I'm still in the Orient!"

There was silence. Neither of them spoke

of Japan or the tiny, long-hoped-for son buried under the cryptomerias. Captain Windsor, remembering, saw in place of the frail figure on the narrow hospital bed, a young mother trying, with pathetic bravery, to fight down her grief and make his week's leave at Nikko less forlorn. "I never hear the sound of waterfalls or smell the heavy scent of those pink-spotted lilies but it all comes back," he thought, and reached for her thin hand on the coverlet.

Mrs. Windsor broke the silence. "We didn't have many Philippine holidays," she commented. "I can't seem to think of any except the afternoon the admiral, you, and I went for a walk back of Olongapo and the caribou chased us. It *was* ignominious, after we'd run across the field, and nearly broken our necks clambering over the fence, to find that the wretched animal was securely tied. I'll never forget the gallant way the admiral and you sprinted and didn't bother about me!"


"We didn't need to! You were a full lap ahead of us the whole way! Much you cared whether your poor husband was gored to death by a mad buffalo. Yes? Come in!"

The house physician opened the door and glanced sharply at Mrs. Windsor's white face. "All right?" he questioned. She nodded.

"We're having a half-holiday together. Don't get them very often in war-time," vouchsafed the captain genially. "She's looking much better?" his voice unconsciously begged assurance.

The doctor smiled. "Fine things, holidays!" he agreed. "I always spend mine at other hospitals watching crack surgeons perform difficult operations. Oh, yes! I know all about the old lady who kissed the cow!" he laughed, adding, as he closed the door, "I'll be on this floor for the rest of the afternoon."

Mrs. Windsor ignored the interruption. "Of all the places we've lived I like this city the least," she said bitterly; "it's hotter than Tawi Tawi in the summer and colder than Greenland in the winter! Since we've been stationed here I've realized why, if George Washington had to live here, he refused a third term; but what I'll *never* comprehend is why he accepted a second one."






"You'd have liked it if you hadn't been ill," her husband comforted; "illness spoils any place."

Silence again. The captain gently patted his wife's hand and cleared his throat to speak, then changed his mind. Outside the sunlight was waning; the flag on the building opposite snapped sharply in the breeze; a friendly sparrow hopped to the window-ledge, looked in, and flew away. From inside the hospital came the subdued rumble of a rubber-tired cart returning from the operating-room, and the preliminary rattle of dishes on supper trays.

Mrs. Windsor spoke reflectively: "Those long months when your ship was away on the cruise around the world were the hardest I've ever known," she said. "I was in a hotel on Brooklyn Heights, and I had been watching for two hours when, quite suddenly, just at noon, the battleship slid into view and came down the river and under the Brooklyn Bridge, along the Battery, past Governor's Island. It was sunshiny; the band playing, the deck blue with sailors, and all the tugs and all the ferry-boats, crowded with women



whose husbands couldn't be snatched away at a moment's notice, were whistling.

"When you came back it was winter at Old Point. A great crowd had been waiting since dawn on the sea-wall. It was raining hard; a gray fog over everything—none of the glamour of that 'first smudge of smoke' on the horizon. But again, just at noon, the first ship came out of the mist, quite near. And the long months of missing you were over. . . ."

Captain Windsor nodded. "I thought we'd *never* get back," he agreed. "I can't tell you what it has meant to me to know, always, that you were waiting for me. They've been happy years, Beth!"

She seemed not to hear. "I was thinking of the time that the German division came over to visit America, and your ship was detailed to help entertain them. Do you remember the parties on the *Moltke* and our comments on how low and near the water those ships were? They kept awnings stretched all the time they were in port, but a junior officer told me that at sea, when the awnings were furled, the cinders were dreadful! And they

kept their turrets tightly locked all the time that they were here—although they expected to be shown everything on *our* ships!”

“It isn’t so long ago. If any one had told me *then* that within ten years we’d be fighting Germany, I wouldn’t have believed them,” said her husband.

“I disliked some of those officers on sight! One of them had the cruelest expression; I expect, when the war is over, to hear that he framed the submarine orders. But the captain—the one who had such a pleasant face and kindly voice, and who was so proud of the pictures of his wife and daughter—when I remember him I know that there is at least one nice man in Germany!” commented Mrs. Windsor.

“Must be lonesome for him,” remarked the captain, and added: “It’ll be lonesome for the rest of them when this war is over. Germans will be the loneliest people on earth!”

Mrs. Windsor agreed: “The Germans can go to Austria for their much-prized summer vacations, and the Austrians to Germany—with side-trips to Bulgaria and Turkey.” She

was talking against the rising silence. She had been taken ill shortly after the *Molike's* visit; some of the later holidays she did not care to remember.

Almost uncannily her husband answered: "When you're well we'll have some more good times. I've always wanted to see India and Ceylon, and you've yearned to catch a bird of paradise on his native heath—when we learn where that heath is! Then there's Java and the gorges of the Yangtze. Get up! You untravelled young provincial! A whole world you've hardly touched is waiting for you!"

She did not reply; there was silence in the darkening room.

With determined bravery the captain spoke: "This is a great war, Beth. And when you think of the loss, the suffering, the horror and tragedy; the unnecessary brutality to women and little children, it makes you wonder what punishment can be adequate. But before we talk of punishment there's a big job to be finished up; every man's work will be cut out for him, either here or abroad, and each man must answer the call when it comes

—personal feelings held in check—in the struggle for a great principle. I've been working for months on an organization that is going to be a success, but, of course, we can't put it in force in America." He fumbled at the buttons of his blouse. "Just think, Beth, they're going to let me go abroad with it and if I succeed you'll be proud of me. I've always wanted you to be proud of me, Beth, and now I have my chance! I'm not supposed to tell *any one* what the job is, but I'm going to tell you!"

He leaned and whispered, long and earnestly, explaining in detail, while she listened intently and nodded her comprehension. "Splendid!" she agreed; "it's wonderful to think that you've been allowed to plan and perfect it! You'll get all the credit!"

He sighed with relief. Why had he been afraid to tell her? All the years her encouragement and sympathy had been his one unfailing asset. Yet, somehow, she looked so small, as though in the last few moments she had crumpled down in the bed. He glanced surreptitiously at his watch. "I knew you'd understand," he said gratefully; "you've always

understood. It will be the best duty I've ever had, far and away! And when I get back you'll be well, waiting for me. We'll go on another honeymoon to Quebec, and I'll buy you an ermine coat (the collar will have grown up!) Of course it will all work out right. Why, Beth, what is it?"

Mrs. Windsor, fighting for breath, gasped through her tears: "I can't . . . pretend any longer. . . . Do you suppose . . . after all these years . . . that I can't tell when you are trying . . . to keep something from me? . . . When do you go? . . . Have you your orders?"

Silently he laid the folded orders on the coverlet. "I leave at seven to-night. The ship sails at dawn," he whispered.

From outside came the sound of running feet; the door opened. Captain Windsor found himself being gently propelled toward the corridor. The door closed.

After a while the cheerful interne joined him and talked, with impersonal breeziness, of a brother in France: "Lucky kid! Facing Metz!" And added: "Hear you're going to-night?"

Captain Windsor swallowed hard and nodded: "My wife?" he questioned with dumb misery.

The interne was disinterestedly assuring: "This afternoon didn't really make any difference—the end was so near—a matter of a week or ten days! But we couldn't take the responsibility of explaining, each day, why you didn't come to see her, if you had gone without telling her."

Captain Windsor felt gropingly for a chair. "Will she have to suffer?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" said the interne with professional cheerfulness; "the pain is nearly over. I can promise you that!"

Later, as his train time drew near, the captain bent, for a grudgingly vouchsafed minute, to kiss her. "Couldn't you wait . . . for the . . . few days?" she whispered; then, in answer to his agonized mumble of "War time *orders*," "Good-by—good luck! Come safely—home," she said.

Turning blindly away, he realized for the first time that he held something, and looked down. Tightly crumpled in his clinched hand

was the outward and visible sign of the arduously won experience of his long career; the shining reward for months of war-time work and planning: His orders.



## V

### ANCHORS AWEIGH

So firmly is the superstition, "It is bad luck to watch your husband's ship out of sight," established among "the wives" in the United States navy, that if you had questioned Mrs. Frank Bradley—wife of a junior lieutenant and a bride of two months—as to its origin, she would have answered unhesitatingly that it was "an order from the secretary of the navy."

She had no idea of disobeying the order when, after bidding her husband good-by very early that morning and crying herself into a state of exhaustion afterward, she realized she could get to the navy-yard in time to see the ship sail and perhaps catch a last glimpse of him.

Like most officers, Lieutenant Bradley "didn't want *his* wife making a nuisance of herself around the ship," but if she sat in the jitney he wouldn't know she was there.

And the jitney-man, on being questioned as to charges—for the prudent wife of a junior lieutenant attends to such details, even in time of stress—had answered that “he wouldn’t charge anything for waiting; it’d be a kind of novelty to watch a battleship get away.”

Out of the wind, sheltered by a building, Mrs. Bradley could see that the few men on deck were busy.

The duty-launch had been hoisted and secured; the forward gangway lowered; two noisy tugs came alongside; on the bridge the navigator bent over a large chart; the mail-orderly returned from his last trip to the post-office; a messenger boy, whistling lustily, sauntered up with a handful of telegrams.

Four bells struck. The ship was to sail at half-past ten. Through a blur of tears Mrs. Bradley saw the navy-yard workmen gather about the after gangway.

Several poorly clad women arrived and stood near her; they tried to cheer a younger woman who was sobbing and monotonously asking: “What if there’s war?”

The jitney-man heard her. “If there’s

war that big ship might be the first one to go to the bottom," he observed cheerfully to his passenger.

"Good morning! It's little Mrs. Bradley, isn't it?" questioned a pleasant voice.

The admiral's wife stood beside the jitney.

"I'm visiting at the commandant's—the house is so near I couldn't resist getting a last glimpse of things," she said, and laughed apologetically. "John hates women hanging around the ship—but he can't see me here," she added.

"Do admirals feel that way? I thought it was just my husband," said Mrs. Bradley.

The admiral's wife smiled.

"This must be your first parting," she observed.

Mrs. Bradley nodded forlornly.

"Because there are fifty-two officers on that ship—most of them are married—and fifty of the wives aren't anywhere in sight," said the admiral's wife.

"They've grown used to seeing their husbands go—or else they don't love them as I do mine," remarked Mrs. Bradley resentfully.

"I've said good-by to John in every port

from Olongapo to Pensacola; it never loses its novelty by getting easier; but one grows more—patient,” observed the admiral’s wife.

“Other times couldn’t be as bad! This parting is terrible, and hard, because there may be war,” cried Mrs. Bradley.

The admiral’s wife did not answer. She clinched her hands as she remembered a parting long ago in a gray hospital-room, when her ensign son looked at her from unrecognizing eyes and agonizingly moved his body under the encircling bandages. . . .

“Minor turret explosion on battleship,” announced the earliest editions of the newspapers when, without a word for her to treasure through the years, her son had slipped away . . . into the dawn.

Resolutely the admiral’s wife glanced at the little group of women near them.

“Those are sailors’ wives—one of them has a baby that is too tiny to bring here this cold morning,” she said.

“That’s the one that’s crying all the time about war,” volunteered the jitney-man.

“Frank says—it will be a naval war,” said Mrs. Bradley, swallowing with difficulty.

"I hope you cheered him up—our men need all their courage during these trying days," said the admiral's wife briskly. She did not mention that five times during their last few minutes together the admiral had reminded her not to forget to pay his life-insurance dues.

Mrs. Bradley began to cry. "I told Frank . . . that if anything happened to . . . him . . . I'd soon join him," she sobbed.

"Splendid!" observed the admiral's wife dryly; "after that I suppose he left the house singing joyfully—at the top of his voice."

"What gets me is that while those fellows are going about their business on deck there can be a submarine sitting right on the bottom underneath them," remarked the jitney-man speculatively.

"Your first name doesn't happen to be Job, does it?" the admiral's wife asked him impersonally.

"No'm," he answered—"Samuel. Samuel Johnson Jones—but, in case you want me, the telephone's under the name of Sullivan——"

Five bells struck.

The ship's siren tore the silence into dangling shreds. Tugs added their hoarse voices. Near-by destroyers called a greeting—and farewell. Voices shouted orders—through drifting clouds of smoke.

Slowly . . . the great dreadnought moved . . . and as the whistles quieted down the band on the quarter-deck played the opening bars of the favorite Naval Academy song, "Anchors Aweigh."

Gayly the old tune lilted over the crowded gray masses of steel and stone as it had echoed across sunny parade-ground and uproarious football fields—when youth called to youth of springtime that is so quickly gone.

Mrs. Bradley, her eyes shining, jumped from the jitney and frantically waved her muff. Tears and forebodings were swept away by an overwhelming flood of enthusiasm.

The sailors' wives stepped forward; the one with the tiny baby lifted it high and, steadying its head, bade it "look at father's boat—and the pretty flag."

Puffing . . . the tugs warped the ship from the pier . . . shoved her sidewise . . . into

the channel . . . paused . . . a perceptible minute . . . and moved ahead . . . downstream.

Slowly . . . she gathered momentum; at her bow two white-tipped lines of water flowed sharply out . . . more faintly "Anchors Aweigh" drifted back on the cold wind.

Mrs. Bradley, mindful of superstition, turned away and climbed into the jitney.

"But where is the admiral's wife?" she asked.

"The lady that was talking to you? She's gone!" said the jitney-man. "I asked her something, but she didn't answer—just shook her head and walked away—sort of stumbling——"

He cranked the engine vigorously.

"The reason she couldn't answer was because she was crying," said the jitney-man.

## VI

### DUTY FIRST

SOME hours before the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany a watchful observer might have sighted the elusive shadows of coming events.

The fleet, unheralded by the newspapers, returned from their interrupted target-practice off Cape Cruz, Cuba, to the rallying-point of a Virginia port. In the evening the harbor was empty; the next morning saw it crowded, as the long lines of silent, gray ships "stood in" from sea; destroyers sped swiftly to their anchorages, and submarines—like rows of tethered whales—gathered about the parent ships. Soon launches were lowered and scurrying between the anchored fleet and the near-by shore.

The big hotel on the beach filled in an hour with officers' wives—quiet women, whose cheerful voices contrasted sharply with the wistfulness of their unsmiling eyes—and




quickly emptied again as the ships went their appointed ways. Soon the wide harbor was an unbroken, rippling, sunshiny space again.

Where did they go—the ships?

Ask the voyagers on transatlantic liners of the grim vessel with the starry flag that loomed suddenly into view through the treacherous mist.

You may not hear of them—the gray ships—but tireless, alert, vigilant, they go about their work, and behind that narrow line of steel may dwell in safety those “who go upon their lawful occasions” under the Stars and Stripes.

Since that memorable Good Friday when the whistles of Washington announced to the waiting city that the President’s signature had been affixed to a momentous document the changes on the ships have been slight. It is hardly possible to improve upon an organization that has, by years of unceasing effort, reached a high state of proficiency, and, except that the training of numbers of extra men is added to the routine duties, there is little difference; only now the officers’




day begins two hours earlier and ends—when their work is finished.

When, just before dawn, an orderly knocked at the door of the executive officer's stateroom and called "Half-past four, commander!" he did not awaken the occupant of the narrow berth. The executive had decided, hours before, that morning was never coming, as he tossed about and mentally reviewed the contents of yesterday's letter and wireless message sent by his wife.

They were from a distant city, where she had gone to consult a famous surgeon about their only child—the small son whose growing helplessness hung like a sombre cloud over all their days—and choked any references to the future with a shadowy hand; for the boy was partially and increasingly paralyzed, and every dollar they could spare had gone to doctors of varying capabilities and unvarying avariciousness—and all the time the child grew worse.

This great specialist was their last, hard-wrung resort. The executive's wife had written of the quick, skilful diagnosis, and




had followed the letter by a wireless message—"The surgeon would operate to-morrow at ten—a grave operation, but the boy's only chance! Could he come?" it ended in a little burst of panic and loneliness.

The executive officer smothered a groan and, sitting up, glanced at the pale stars and gray waste of water framed by the open port-hole. The ship was short three officers through illness—and even if he could have been spared he could not have reached the hospital until five hours after the operation was over. It was so impossible that he had not even spoken to the captain.

Twenty minutes later he stepped on deck and faced the routine business of his day in the weird light of the early dawn.

The executive officer of a battleship or dreadnought holds the rank of commander and, if he is competent, the busiest billet on the ship. He is the housekeeper; every detail passes through his hands on its way to the captain; he receives the report of each departmental head; knows the standing and capabilities of every member of the crew. All records of mistakes or accidents are his to



investigate, boil down, strip of unnecessary details and present—mere shadows of their original selves—to the captain for settlement. On board ship an executive officer knows everything—except idleness.

And now, accompanied by the officer of the deck, this executive went over the two rows of launches and duty-boats: tested pulleys, examined ropes, glanced over the detailed lists of their engine fitness; asked a question here, made a suggestion there, and, leaving the officers in charge scribbling in their note-books, went on with the boatswain to inspect the booms—those long poles to which launches are fastened, and up which the launch crews scramble with a dexterity that makes the tense observer a ready convert to the Darwinian theory.

The executive took no chances on the accuracy of any scientific hypothesis as he examined the lashings and rungs of the rope ladders, the tension of the breast-high man-ropes, the strength of the boat-fastenings, and nodded his commendation.


Forward, a little group of stewards waited as he came toward the gangway-ladder. He

noted, with minute care, the condition of hoists and pulleys, hinges, treads, and landing-platform, and spoke his approval to the officer of the deck.

This opened the ladder to traffic; the stewards and assistant paymaster departed on waiting launches to the nearest port to lay in several days' fresh food supply for officers and crew.

The executive, examining the anchor gear, spoke to the paymaster and started on his survey of the morning watch. Officers and men were in their places and, with unhurried step, the commander made his rounds from station to station until, after the assistant paymaster and the steward's return, the ship proceeded on her way and the executive, turning over the deck to the officer in charge, went down to the ward-room for his breakfast.

The long table, extending across the officer's compartment, was simmering with indignant comment. The daily wireless news from Arlington had just been delivered, and an account of the shelling of a sunken ship's life-boat by the attacking submarine was the subject of conversation.



"Have you seen the report, commander?" demanded the doctor; "Mahoney, the gunner who went from this ship, was among those killed. Nice warfare—shooting unarmed men in an open life-boat!"

The executive gave a sharp exclamation. "Not Mahoney!" and added: "He came with me from my last shore station. I first noticed him when he was one of the orderlies outside our house. My boy . . . was devoted to Mahoney."

"He was a corking gunner," observed the ordnance officer, and bitterly advocated a general Teutonic exodus to an uncharted tropics.

"Mahoney was promoted to coxswain before he went up for gunner, at the navy-yard," commented the executive, pursuing his remembrances; "he was so competent that the admiral wanted him—but he *never* would answer the quartermaster's hail. He'd let the quartermaster bawl—while he eased in to the gangway—and let the admiral out, with no one to receive him!"

"What happened?" asked the ordnance officer.

"I went over the answers about fifty times with Mahoney. You *must* answer according to the ranking officer you have aboard. If it's an admiral you answer, 'Flag.' If it's a captain you answer the name of his ship; if it's an officer answer 'Aye, aye'; a junior or petty officer, 'No, no'; an enlisted man, 'Hello.'


"'I'm not given to so much talking,' growled Mahoney, and the very next day I happened to be on the dock when the quartermaster hailed, 'Boat ahoy!' and Mahoney's voice answered: 'One aye, aye! Two no, no's! Three hallo's! And a pay-clerk!' and seeing me he added in the same yell, 'I'm through with launchin'—I'll be tryin' for a gunner's rate—it's more peaceful,'" recounted the executive, and smiled at the ripple of laughter, but sobered as he remembered. "My boy—was around in his wheel-chair. Mahoney talked enough to him. My boy—was devoted to Mahoney," said the commander, pushing back his chair and rising.

From the ward-room he climbed to the upper decks and bridge, to see that the orders for the morning's work were being carried out.

Then, accompanied by the ordnance officer,

he descended to the gun-deck. All matters pertaining to the smooth working of the guns received painstaking, absorbed attention. The sights, the hoists, the breeches, each had their share. The ordnance officer, satisfied, went his way, while the executive, turning, entered the crew's mess-hall—just as the triangular red meal-pennant crept to the yard-arm and the clatter of dishes wrestled with the aroma of coffee. He passed critically, between the long rows of tables, to the galley. Here his approach caused a decided commotion; the assistant cook had barely time to make temporary repairs following an agonized but noiseless tussle with Billy, the ship's mascot—a wayward and defiant goat with an uncontrolled penchant for frequenting the forbidden galley during meal-hours. He met the executive, a few steps beyond, wearing an aggrieved expression and some fragments of potato-peelings; and the commander, passing warily by, registered the remembrance of Billy's provocative, sprightly *pas seul* to tell his son.

Would he ever hear again the old question: "What did the goat do *next*, father?"





The executive winced as he turned away.

At the door of his office his clerk met him with the mail—just put aboard from a tug. The commander settled at his desk and sorted over the pile of letters and packages. He took up the official mail first. A few documents were laid aside for the captain's perusal; others he read carefully and locked away in the desk drawer; a number were thrown into the wire basket to be answered by dictation.

Next came his personal mail. Two letters were from former mess-attendants asking for his assistance in getting a transfer and a higher rating; these were added to the contents of the wire basket. Eight were wedding invitations—"The whole army is getting married!" mused the executive; he came of seafaring stock, but to-day he questioned the charms of his beloved branch of the service. "It's pretty fine to be on land," thought the executive wistfully as he noticed that, for the first time in many months, there was no letter from his wife. Instead a large, square envelope with the postmark of an inland city came to his hand. It was a re-

quest from an amateur statistician who mentioned various political affiliations and demanded information as to the amount disbursed daily and yearly by the government for officers' food.

"'I find it easy to get the figures of the money spent for the sailors' rations, but consider it very suspicious that, in these hard times, there is no statement made about the quality and cost of food supplied to officers. As a taxpayer I demand to know,'" read the executive, and dictated the answer to his yeoman.

"All officers of the United States navy at sea, or on shore duty, buy and pay for every article of food they use," clicked off the typewriter.

The rest of the letters were from the wives or mothers of sailors in the ship's crew. The executive sighed, as he looked at the number of them. Some were pathetic—some abusive. An incoherent scrawl threatened dire things unless the writer's husband, a young machinist's mate (with a good record), continued his allotment.

From an address in down-town east-side

New York a girl wrote that just as she had gotten together her wedding outfit the prospective bridegroom had vanished. She "had heard that he had enlisted in the navy under an assumed name and was serving on some ship"—what name or which ship she did not know, but, endowing the executive with omniscience, bade him seek out the elusive swain and waken his slumbering sense of responsibility.

"Wonder why she picked *on this ship?*" grumbled the recipient aggrievedly.

One woman, mistaking the commander for the doctor, went into the minute details of an obscure illness and enlarged on the necessity of the sailor-relative's immediate return.

A short note from a mother asked that her son might be allowed to come home. "His father is dying," the letter ended with a pathetic dignity.

The last communication—an anonymous one—held a threat. The executive officer flipped it with his finger. "Knew he was one of a gang of thieves—wish I could catch the others," he said aloud, as he divided the letters into four piles. One pile he sent to


the chaplain; another he put aside for future consideration; a single letter was enclosed to the police of a near-by city for investigation; the rest he gathered up to discuss with the captain.

A knock sounded. "Muster, sir," said the orderly. The executive followed him to the deck.

Aft, a bugle was sounding the morning call above the tramp of many feet, as the men marched up or fell in with their divisions. The captain of marines made his report; the ordnance, engineer, and navigating officers accounted for their departments; the paymaster varied his document with two recommendations; the doctor, and the master-at-arms in charge of the ship's jail, accounted for absentees.

The executive gave close attention to the reports, questioned, objected, approved; then, with his hands full of papers and letters, turned toward the captain's door.

The bugle sounded shrilly for "setting-up" drill, and the sailors and marines launched valiantly but disgustedly into the gymnastic exercises laid out with wise attention to their



physical welfare, while Billy, from the shadow of the turret, watched with amazed wonder his friends' unfruitful antics.

Ding-ding! Ding-ding! rang the ship's bell.

The executive officer stopped short.

Ten o'clock!

*Far away . . . in a hospital waiting-room his wife was sitting—silent, wide-eyed, with fingers interlocked to hide their trembling, and alone—except for the nurses with their shop-worn, professional cheerfulness. And somewhere—in a room above her—an ether cone descending over a small, frightened, fever-flushed face . . .*

The executive officer stumbled a little as he walked toward the captain's door.

Inside he gave his careful report, answered questions, made a suggestion, wrote down some directions, and, by sheer force of will, concentrated all his attention on the work before him, and finishing rose to go.

The captain glanced at him with level, kindly eyes. "Anything wrong, commander?" he asked, and stood silent as the executive, with the few scattered words, "My boy—trepan—this morning," turned and hurried away.



Far away . . . in a hospital waiting-room his wife was sitting.




On deck the bugles sang their orders as the crew broke into small groups. Some, with their officers, entered the thick steel turrets where each great fifty-foot gun can throw death and destruction far beyond the dim horizon-line; others manned the many smaller guns; a detail of officers and men climbed to the dizzy heights of the cage-masts to "observe" how and where the shots fell. Signal-corps men brightened the bridge-ends with the flutter and whirl of small flags. Battle practice was on; and the executive officer at his battle station watched and criticised.

This finished, he hurried back to his office and the daily preliminary mast, where the requests and complaints too trivial to reach the captain are disposed of and investigations of the more serious cases are prepared before the case is taken up at the official police court.

An executive's duties bring him in close touch with the enlisted personnel, and his judgment, trained in this exacting daily school, is disconcertingly keen.

Three men, requesting leave of absence to





visit dying relatives, went back to their work with great celerity. A cook, yearning for a navy-yard station near his family, was cautioned against his growing inclination toward permanent shore duty, and departed, with a rueful grin. Two stokers wanted higher ratings; a coxswain requested his good-conduct stripes. These were noted and put down for investigation.

The executive turned to the big, pleasant-faced machinist's mate who stood next.

"Want to stop your wife's monthly allotment—why?" he asked, and laid the pitiful evidence—a handful of letters from neighbors, a probation officer, and reluctant relatives—on the abusive scrawl he had received that morning.

The primrose path! That led through moving-picture palaces and amusement parks to the saloons.

"Any children?" asked the executive, mentally recruiting the chaplain's assistance.

"No, sir," answered the machinist and added a grim denunciation of idle women and their ways, as he went out of the narrow door, just as eight bells gave the signal for the band

to assist at the crew's enjoyment of their dinner.

The commander, glancing toward his desk, noticed three packages remaining from his morning mail and tore them open. The first two were official, but from the third he took out a wrapped and padded bundle. A small mechanical replica of an English battleship's launch, complete in every detail, met his astonished eyes. Around the boat-hook, held by the miniature coxswain on the tiny deck, a thin piece of paper was twisted; the executive unwound it. His son's name headed the few lines of writing. "One hello! The coxswain's me. This will run fine in the bathtub. I'll be seeing you soon," it read. And the signature was Mahoney's.

The executive officer hastily examined the wrappings, noting the censor's veto and the postmark. The box had been mailed in Liverpool a week before Mahoney started on the return voyage of his ill-fated duty.

"I'll be seeing you soon," reread the commander, and shivered in the warm air.

The long day dragged on.

At luncheon the executive officer ate, un-


noting, what was put before him; answered, unheeding, the chaff of conversation addressed to him. Only the orderlies, with wireless messages, caught his immediate attention as, with apprehensive dread, he opened and read the routine announcements.

At one o'clock he accompanied the captain to "mast," and gave the results of his investigations or knowledge in deciding questionable cases.

This finished, the afternoon drills commenced.

The executive made frequent visits to different points where the ship's work was going forward or, in his office, checked over transfers, initialled approved requests for advanced ratings, went over examinations for promotions, considered changes of detail and transfers of sailors from one division to another—to keep the ship's organization up to its highest efficiency—and heard frequent reports.

With the ordnance officer he looked over a catch in the working of one of the ammunition hoists, and took down notes of the proposed changes; inspected the engine-room



where many brawny stokers toiled and skylarked in the glare of the hungry furnaces. The paymaster's storeroom needed repainting, the executive decided; and gave the order—oblivious of the paymaster's involuntary motion to clasp his head with both hands, as he thought of the impending paint-chipping gang attacking the steel bulkheads with hammers and chisels.

At the doctor's department the odors of anæsthetics and disinfectants wafted out through the hospitably open door; the executive hurried past and did not return, nor did he inspect the wireless-room—where messages came and went—with snapping and clicking.


As the afternoon waned he became conscious that, through the usual Freemasonry of ship life, the officers had heard of his trouble. The navigator, finishing a statement of affairs in his department, launched into an impersonal diatribe on the miracles wrought by modern surgery. The bachelor captain of marines, recommending some trivial changes in the guard, broke off to speak with inspiring earnestness on the marvellous recupera-

tive power of children. The doctor came in without any camouflage of reports or questions and started upon a learned medical discourse; then—remembering his own three clothes-destroying, shoe-eliminating young pirates—choked, and departed hastily. The chaplain paused in the threshing out of truth from romance in a letter under investigation, and cleared his throat. . . .

From somewhere aft came a wail of unspeakable anguish, of heartrending, tear-wringing melancholy; long crescendos and discords of such rasping shrillness that, as the notes rose and fell the chaplain remarked thoughtfully that one of his teeth needed filling; then, starting up, glanced through the door and down the long deck to where a sailor, seated on an upturned bucket, smiled cheerfully at his increasing power with the mouth-organ.

“What was I saying?” inquired the chaplain, and left volunteering to make the musician pocket his instrument—or abandon it.

And after dinner, at the evening torpedo-defense drill, the sailors “fell to” with dash



and vigor, and the last exercise of the day drew to a triumphant finish as the executive, after overlooking the arrangements for tomorrow's pickets and patrols, and verifying the night shifts of officers and men, reported to the captain that the water-tight doors were closed and everything secure.

"Any message yet—from your wife?" the captain asked.

The executive shook his head dumbly and, bidding the captain good night, wearily descended the ladder and went to his cabin.

Ding-ding! Ding-ding! sounded the ship's bell.

"Ten o'clock—*again*," muttered the executive, switching on the light. The cluttered desk demanded his attention; painstakingly he straightened, sorted, arranged—dragging out each act to take the extreme limit of time—but the little box, with the mechanical steam-launch and message, he put quickly out of sight in a seldom-opened lower drawer.

"Poor Mahoney," said the executive, and glanced toward his bunk. He was tired . . . but the dark . . . with no protect-


ing wall of work between him . . . and his thoughts. . . .

For a moment he stood, looking through the open port-hole at the stately procession of the stars—the whirl and sweep of water going its appointed way with the changing tides—and heard the wide, healing wind singing through the cage-masts—and a little feeling of comfort, born of the sense of law and order in all created things, came to him, to be quickly followed by that old pathetic grievance of the children of men, who look with aching eyes at nature's unpitying joyousness. . . .

How far would the agonized cry of one little suffering child reach—toward the sky? The merest needle-point of sound—held up—against the illimitable, spacious heavens!

He turned, with a sudden, unreasoning terror, to face an orderly standing in the doorway. . . .

"Wireless for you, sir. Any answer?" asked the messenger, watching the executive as he stood holding the unopened telegram in his trembling hand. The commander did not reply as, at last, he tore open the message.



But the orderly, waiting outside, heard him give a little breathless exclamation of thankfulness—and saw him walk unsteadily to the desk-chair—and bury his face against his arms.



## VII

### THE ADMIRAL'S HOLLYHOCKS

"You look as though you had seen a ghost, Admiral," I called. We had the club library to ourselves, but the admiral, sitting by a window overlooking the avenue, did not glance up from a dazed contemplation of the service paper in his hand.

"I have," he answered so shortly that I wondered, with resentment, if he thought I was trying to pry into his affairs. I am not a naval officer; but I know the admiral fairly well. I've seen him at the club, almost daily, during the eight or ten years since he was retired from active service; I like him, too—although sometimes we don't quite understand each other.

"I beg your pardon, Admiral," I said stiffly. I rather expected him to apologize, but as he paid no attention, and sat staring through the window, I took up my catalogue again and wondered, with my annual wonder-

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ment, *why* the flowers the seedmen advertise are so different from the specimens my garden produces——

"Do you know anything about flowers?" asked the admiral, so unexpectedly that I forgot to show my offense at his earlier treatment.

"Why, yes," I answered, getting up and going over to a chair facing him; "they're rather a hobby of mine." I held out the catalogue. "I was just looking over the spring lists. We've a big garden on our Long Island place——"

The admiral didn't seem to be listening. His eyes were fixed on a show-window opposite, where a florist's assistant was busy redecorating.

Presently he roused himself to say: "I can't tell one flower from another—except hollyhocks! My mother loved them; she used to trade, and buy, and beg hollyhock seeds." The admiral paused. "I don't often see hollyhocks any more," he said.

"Well, no," I agreed, "they're out of fashion. You rarely see hollyhocks in the Long Island or Newport gardens. They're

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kind of unappealing, commonplace flowers, and now that people don't have back fences there isn't any place for them."

"Hollyhocks are the flowers of palaces and the symbol of tragedy," asserted the admiral with such sharp emphasis that I glanced affrontedly at him.

"Well—really—" I began, but he interrupted me. "Have you travelled in China? Not around the treaty ports—but through the inland cities?" And at my negative answer he went on: "At Nanking are the ruins of an imperial city of surpassing magnificence. Palaces, bridges, and walls crumbling into dilapidation—the aftermath of the Taiping Rebellion. But every summer the old courtyards are abloom with hollyhocks—as if the blithe ghosts of the court beauties whose mutilated bodies choked the old moats had come back to laugh at torture and death.

"And in the gardens of the Forbidden City—on the shore of the lake—there is a marble bench. The young emperor used to sit there, hour after hour, hoping, fearing, dreaming, planning for the future of his country.

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"He's dead—murdered—but to-day, back of his bench, the hollyhocks, a massed legion of pink and crimson, still blossom against the lacelike carvings of the marble wall—the flowers of palace gardens; the camp-followers of disaster!"

The admiral paused. "It's forty-eight years since I saw my first Chinese hollyhocks," he said with wistful amazement, and lapsed into silence.

"Were they connected with a tragedy? I'd like to hear about it if it wouldn't bore you," I said humbly. I could have understood if he had mentioned gardenias, or orchids, or even gloxinias—but hollyhocks!

The admiral hesitated, and reluctantly folded the service paper. "It isn't exactly an amusing story," he said, and after a pause commenced:

"Five of us went, a month after our graduating exercises at the Naval Academy, to the old *Shenandoah* in the Asiatic Squadron—Morgan, Rees, Tracy, Carter, and I. Carter, the fun-loving, joke-making member of our class, surprised us on Graduation Day by quietly marrying the little Annapolis girl

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with whom he had been in love for over a year.


"She came to the station the morning we left, carrying some kind of charm for Carter to wear around his neck. 'It will bring you home safely,' she quavered forlornly, her face red from crying. She must have been all of seventeen !

"We were weeks getting out to the Orient and months cruising about until, in the summer of the next year, we anchored at Kiukiang for an overhaul period and to give the men shore liberty.

"It was my first view of the Yangtze and of the crowded, gray-walled river cities with their ponderous, guarded gates.

"Kiukiang is one of these cities. Time has touched it gently—even the lacquered doors of the great temple to Kwanyin, Goddess of Mercy, on the river-bank overlooking the city wall, show little sign of the passing of the centuries.

"Near our anchorage, that morning forty-eight years ago, a partly burned junk was the centre of interest; the red boats of the river police surrounded it and, from an open



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sampan, some women raised a loud, insistent wail of lamentation.

"Carter was officer of the deck; I overheard him, joining the ship's navigator, in questioning the Chinese river-pilot who had towed the *Shenandoah* to her anchorage.

"'How come?' inquired the navigator, pointing toward the disabled junk.


"'One-pieceee pirate, catchee,' answered the pilot gravely.

"'Where were the crew? One pirate couldn't do all that!' objected Carter.

"The pilot wrinkled his forehead in puzzled inarticulateness. 'One-pieceee, all-same big gang,' he explained; 'pirate *never so bad before* on Yangtze! Catch-ee junk, kill-ee crew, steal-ee cargo!'

"'What are the officials doing? Why don't *they* get after the pirates?' asked the navigator.

"'Have try! Polices-es try! Top-side mandarin try! Viceroy try! Then all-ee together try! No can do! Pirate every time get away,' asserted the pilot vehemently, then lowered his voice; 'you see'—he pointed toward the wreck—'junk number-one man



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go, last week, temple-side; tell Kwanyin when him start. Tell her, very loud, of much-ee money cargo; mak-ee off'ring. No matter! Kwanyin not hear; pirate catch-ee, all-ee same-ee!

"'What are those women crying about?' asked Carter as a louder wail pierced the air.

"'Look-ee see if husbands still there,' answered the pilot, and added, with the fatalistic indifference of his race: 'Husbands' bodies have float Woosung-side by now!'

"'Poor devils!' said Carter.

"The pilot paused at the gangway-ladder. 'Never before *such cruel worse* pirates on all-ee Yangtze,' he said as he disappeared.

"I joined the navigator and Carter and asked: 'Do you believe in pirates? I don't!'

"'No,' answered Carter; 'all the books I got for Christmas, when I was a kid, were full of ghosts or pirates; the boy-buccaneer always did them up, easily. But those women find them real enough,' he added, as the forlorn sampan-load swept by us.

"I glanced at the enticing near-by shore. 'I'm off duty this afternoon. When your



“ ‘Pirate never so bad before on Yangtze! Catch-ee junk, kill-ee crew, steal-ee cargo!’ ”



1

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watch is over, let's go and see the town. Tracy, Morgan, and Rees want to go, too.'

" 'Don't let the pirates catch you,' laughed the navigator, turning away.

"That afternoon we had our first intimate view of our first Chinese city with its crowded roads and its busy, toiling people.

"And the shops! Open to the street, and apparently bare of any merchandise until you asked; then, like a magician's trick, out came the thick, lustrous silks, the colorful embroideries.

"Carter had forsworn cigarettes months before, and now the reason for his self-denial was disclosed as he proudly acquired a length of heavy, glittering brocade, while we stood respectfully by. But later, when he paused entranced before a tiny Chinese cap to be worn by a baby at its first ceremonial, we laughed uproariously.

" 'Getting ready for a dressy second childhood, Carter?' teased Tracy.

"Carter flushed and mumbled an answer which was interrupted by Rees's exclamation: '*Listen to that temple-bell!*'

"Boom! rang the bell. Boom! Boom!

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— boom! Boom—boom-boom. The clear, reverberating notes seemed to linger in the air.

“‘It rings like a signal! Must be part of the temple service, but doesn’t it sound like a code?’ questioned Rees.

“‘Is there any reason why we shouldn’t go and see the temple and pagoda? I can’t see why they’d object to our looking about; at home, we’re always glad to show strangers our new Congregational Church,’ vouchsafed Tracy.

“‘Except for the big additions to the storehousey-looking buildings on each side, that temple must have been a fossil when Christopher Columbus was cutting his first tooth,’ commented Rees dryly; ‘wonder what they need so much storeroom for?’

“‘Let’s go and see,’ I suggested.

“The temple was heavy and old and solid, with large connecting storage-rooms for the safe-keeping of the magnificent and valuable adjuncts used in the temple’s ceremonial services. Outside, a slender, seven-storied, memorial pagoda loomed high, overlooking the river-valley for miles. Inside, on the dim

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altar, a great golden Kwanyin gazed with placid, unnoting eyes through the cloying blue smoke from the incense-burners. In charge were a young priest with cowed, half-witted expression, and an old priest with a sharp, cruel face and ugly, clawlike hands.

"‘Those two spoil the whole thing,’ grumbled Tracy, glowering at the old priest, whose eyes, since we entered the temple, had never left us.

"‘I wonder which one rings the bell—and where is the belfry?’ inquired Carter.

"‘Belfry!’ ejaculated Rees, pointing. The bell, twenty feet high, hung in a dim corner. We went to examine it.

"‘That bronze is a foot thick—and look what they use for a clapper! The trunk of a tree swung on chains from a beam in the ceiling strikes on the outer rim. No wonder it echoes!’ exclaimed Morgan.

"Rees touched the heavy chains. ‘It’s balanced to work like a watch,’ he admired, and turned toward the old priest, who was watching us. ‘How do you strike that signal we heard? Is it part of the afternoon service?’ he asked.

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"‘He doesn’t understand English, Rees,’ growled Carter.

"‘The priest came nearer and, half closing his ugly eyes, demanded: ‘What for—you want to know?’

"‘We looked at him in startled silence.

"‘‘What for—you come here?’ he asked sharply, while his long, clawlike fingers moved against his dirty robe.

"‘‘We came to see the temple and pagoda. You have a wonderful view! Nothing can happen on the river that you can’t watch from here,’ answered Tracy courteously.

"‘The priest drew a sharp breath through his closed teeth; it sounded like the hiss made by a snake that is coiling to strike.

"‘‘You come gunboat! I know!’ he snarled; ‘what for—you come Kiukiang-side? What—you want—here?’

"‘We looked at him in amazement.

"‘‘You keep away from Kwanyin’s temple,’ he ordered. ‘No can come here!’ and hustled us out.

"‘‘What ailed him?’ questioned Carter explosively, as we made our way back to the *Shenandoah*. ‘Are you fellows going to

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let him chase you away?' questioned Rees contrarily. 'We'd better keep out of his temple, but I'm going to the pagoda whenever I feel like it! It's a great place to watch everything.'

"It was. We went there every time we were ashore, and as long as we loitered about the pagoda the old priest did not notice us, but any step toward the temple or around the storehouses brought almost instant response. One second he was nowhere in sight, the next, 'What you want—here?' sounded shrilly beside us.

"'Who'd want to smother inside that smoky old temple when there's so much doing on the river?' wondered Rees, idly watching from the lowest pagoda platform the familiar swarm of red police-boats gathered around a big, disabled cargo junk. 'The pirates bagged her last night, hardly a mile below here,' he volunteered, and added: 'I'd like to know where those cutthroats land their loot before they dispose of it?'

"'Maybe the old priest thinks *we* are pirates! He couldn't always be on our trail, as he is, if he wasn't keeping an eye on us,' soliloquized Morgan.

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“‘I’m glad some one is interested. I call Kiukiang pretty dull,’ yawned Carter, glancing indifferently down the wide valley. Something attracted his attention. ‘Say, fellows! Look at that grove of trees on the river-bank a half-mile outside the city wall. Can’t you see what seem like a lot of chimneys?’ he questioned excitedly.

“‘They look like the chimneys of an American house!’ asserted Morgan. ‘Let’s go up higher and get a better view!’

“Recklessly we climbed the crumbling circular stairs and came out on the pagoda’s highest platform.

“‘That is a real house! Maybe some nice girls live there. It isn’t very far,’ suggested Rees.

“‘All the way up-hill through the city—and then along the shore in the sun,’ complained Tracy.

“Carter was leaning far out over the stone balustrade. ‘You needn’t go up to the city gate. There’s a narrow, comparatively new opening right back of the storehouse—and a path, nearly the whole way over to that house, in the shadow of the wall,’ he said quietly.

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"We clung to the railing and looked where he pointed.

" 'Who'd use that path and gate?' wondered Morgan.

" 'We'll go over and find out,' said Carter, leading the way. We followed and, rounding a corner of the storehouse, came suddenly upon the old priest emerging from a small doorway. Beyond him the half-light showed a big room piled high with bales, casks, and boxes. The old priest turned; as his glance rested on us his face grew livid with anger, and, pulling the door sharply shut behind him, he confronted us—his ugly eyes half closed.

" 'What for—you come this side?' he demanded in a tone of snarling fury.

" 'We want to get out. I just discovered this gate from the pagoda. Sorry if we startled you,' explained Carter, as he opened the narrow, heavy postern.

" 'I wonder why it wasn't locked—the gate? And what kind of religious pageants call for all the stuff he had stacked in that storeroom?' questioned Tracy.

" 'I can't understand why he has taken such a dislike to us— *Listen to that bell!*



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It must echo for miles up this quiet valley!' exclaimed Rees as we followed the long path across the moor and in between two granite gateposts.


" 'But this isn't a *house*—it's a palace!' cried Tracy, pausing. 'Look! What does it say on that column? It's a Chinese attempt at English lettering.'

" 'The Hollyhocks,' read Rees slowly and glanced about. 'There seems to be some sort of garden on the river-bank. I can see a lot of weather-stained stone benches. And look at those porches, up-stairs and down, connected by an outside staircase.'

"Hesitatingly we approached. All the window-panes were gone. 'Let's see the inside of the house—there's no one living here,' proposed Carter, swinging himself over the low sill.

"We explored the large wings—a succession of enormous empty rooms—and came out finally into the wide hall that ran through the centre of the house.

" 'Not a stick of furniture—unless you count these barrels and kegs,' said Tracy, sitting down on one.



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"‘It’s rather a—pathetic place,’ commented Rees slowly. ‘The man who had it built was evidently trying to copy from memory some house he had loved at home, and the Chinese workmen either stupidly or wilfully outwitted him. He’s told them “wide stairs”—and look! Those are *at least* fourteen feet across and as steep as a ladder. I’m sure, too, that he didn’t order that foot-high banister with the Chinese carved hand-rail.’

"‘Who *ever built* a house like this in such a hidden, remote place?’ wondered Morgan.

"‘Some poor duffer who had to clear out of his own country. Must have done something pretty bad to need to hide so far off the beaten track as Kiukiang,’ answered Rees.

"‘Carter’s investigations had led him to a window overlooking the river and garden; he gave a sudden exclamation. ‘Come and see the hollyhocks!’ he cried.

"‘There they were—pink, crimson, and white; truants from the half-obliterated flower-beds whose borders of dead box bushes showed long neglect. But the hollyhocks seemed visibly to rejoice in the misfortune that gave them their liberty, for they swarmed



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up the slope in a blur of color, erect and defiant in the hot sunshine.

"Carter continued his observations. 'There's some sort of little harbor dug into the bank, and a sunken path,' he called back from the veranda.

"Behind me a sharp hiss sounded. I jumped, and, turning, confronted the old priest, his face such a distorted mask of malevolent fury that I stepped back appalled. He asked his usual question, punctuating it with a clawing gesture of his sharp, ugly fingers.

"'What you do—here?' he demanded hoarsely.

"'Just looking around. Do you happen to know who built this house?' inquired Morgan with mystified politeness.

"'Why you come here?' snarled the priest.

"'Why shouldn't we come here? This is an American house. We've more right here than a Chinaman,' retorted Rees.

"'No b'long 'Melcan! B'long Scotsman, allee-samee Englis-man,' asserted the priest sharply.

"'Where is he—the Scotchman?' demanded Carter with stern brevity.

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" 'Him long time dead,' declared the priest defiantly, and pointed to a low mound over which the hollyhocks swept in a colorful wave.

"The priest came a step nearer, his ugly eyes gleaming between the half-closed lids. 'Scotsman not like strangers people! Like only Chinaman,' he said harshly.

" 'How can he like anything—if he's dead?' questioned Tracy with soothing literalness.

" 'H'm spee-rit come back,' whispered the priest eerily. 'Come back *ev'ry night!*' he asserted with guileful malevolence. 'Better you go away—not come again. Kiukiang man *not dare* come this side!'

- "Carter eyed him with amused tolerance. 'What's your game, padre?' he asked. 'If
- the Kiukiangers are afraid it's because you've used your job as priest to frighten them away—as you're trying to scare us! I can't see anything in this big, lonely, empty house to make it worth your while.'

"I stepped hastily forward as the old priest raised his hands toward Carter's face; his voice rose to a frantic shriek.

" 'I know *why* you come Kiukiang-side,'

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he snarled, and laughed with defiant mirthlessness. '*You—no—can do!*' he taunted, his voice husky with rage; 'now—get out!' he ordered.

" 'Get out yourself—' began Rees, but Carter intervened. 'What's the use of making him any madder than he is, Rees? It's nothing to us!' he said calmly, and turned to the priest.

" 'Cool down, padre,' he advised with cheerful solicitude. 'No one wants to get your riverside residence away from you. But don't flatter yourself that you scared us with that ghost-story.'

" 'Do you think there really *is* a ghost?' I asked, as we went back toward the city.

" 'I'd say no if we were at home—but this is China, and the Chinese are mortally afraid of the spirits of their ancestors! They're always making offerings to propitiate the dead and induce them to stay where they are,' volunteered Morgan.

" 'Ghost-stories always begin by having the person who is to see the ghost say, "I don't believe in them," ' soliloquized Tracy comfortably.

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"‘If the ghost at The Hollyhocks comes back, it’s probably because he wants to see his flowers,’ I said with a little homesick quiver in my voice.

"‘Ghost nothing! That old Lothario of a priest probably meets some Chinese Mary Jane there, and he doesn’t want his tryst chaperoned,’ laughed Carter.

"‘I’ve always wanted to see a ghost,’ admitted Rees reflectively. ‘If I thought this Chinese variety really comes back I’d go there and stay until I’d seen it.’

"‘Ugh,’ shivered Tracy, adding quickly, ‘anyhow, you can’t get to The Hollyhocks. The city gates close at sundown.’

"‘What are city gates to us?’ questioned Rees airily. ‘There are always a dozen sampans within hail of the ship; it wouldn’t be a half-hour’s row.’ He warmed to the adventure. ‘Let’s go to-night! Anything might happen in *China*! It would be an experience to see a real ghost! And if the old priest was trying, for reasons of his own, to frighten us away, we’ll show him that his fairy-tale didn’t work!’

"Carter laughed and, at my look of sur-

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prise, explained rather lamely: 'I was just thinking—how foolish the old priest would feel.'

" 'I'll go—if the rest of you go—but I don't want to,' lamented Tracy.

"Carter eyed us speculatively. 'Bet you won't do it *this evening!* Bet you'll back down when it gets dark!' he teased incitingly.

" 'Bet we won't!' chorussed Rees, Morgan, and I.

" 'Aren't you coming, Carter?' asked Tracy, grasping at a straw.

" 'I certainly *am!*' promised Carter with disarming sincerity. I mistrusted his tone—he had played many a joke on me—but I could give no reason for my suspicions.

"We left the ship at half past eight that night—and Carter was not with us, for just as we started, an orderly stopped him with a message.

" 'The navigator would like Carter's help in correcting a compass: it would take the whole evening.'

"Carter turned back, after urging us to go ahead. 'You seem to have lost your interest in ghosts, Carter,' growled Tracy as

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we boarded a sampan, while Carter, without answering, leisurely watched us from the *Shenandoah's* deck.

"I hated the whole adventure before we even entered the house—which loomed enormously black and portentous under a starless sky. We chose to stay in the large room at the foot of the staircase ('ghosts always descend the stairs,' volunteered Rees) because of the barrel, which we used for a table, and the kegs which served us as seats. We had brought a couple of candles and a pack of cards, and we started a game while we waited for the promised visit of the punctual ghost.

"We played several cheerful rounds, while the conversation swung from the Naval Academy to our various home towns and out across the Pacific to the *Shenandoah* and our months of uneventful cruising. For uneventfulness this was proving a banner evening except that Tracy won steadily at cards—hitherto an unknown proceeding for him. Morgan did not like to lose; Tracy and he had several arguments.

"I stifled a yawn. 'Are you fellows planning to stay after quarter to twelve? I told



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the sampan man to come back for me then; I have the mid-watch. It's five minutes past eleven now,' I said.

" 'I call this pretty dull,' grumbled Rees. 'We'd have had more fun in Kiukiang. Listen to that racket !'

"From the distant city came the noise of some kind of ceremony. We could hear the clanging metallic crash of cymbals, the high, shrill call of trumpets, the wailing of voices, and, across it, like a great unhurrying pulse, the temple-bell struck in a stately, measured cadence.

" 'What's all the uproar about?' questioned Morgan.

" 'Probably the funeral services for the men murdered on the junk,' I volunteered.

" 'Who ever heard of a funeral where they didn't have a corpse?' demanded Tracy.

" 'There's lots you haven't heard! And, besides, this is China,' asserted Morgan with incontestable finality.

"The discussion ceased for lack of participants.

"Rees listened thoughtfully. 'Sounds like a signal—that bell,' he commented.

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"‘You say that every time you hear it ring,’ Tracy reminded him, and added: ‘Whose play is it?’

"‘Yours. You always hold up the game,’ answered Morgan with well-simulated resignation.

"Tracy, with guilty haste, played a wrong card; a heated argument ensued, stilled, at its height, by Rees’s startled question: ‘*What was that?*’

"From somewhere down the long hallway came the sound of a door swinging on protesting hinges—slowly, with complaining deliberation, until it clicked shut.

"‘Wind,’ explained Morgan uneasily.

"‘There isn’t any wind,’ Tracy answered with unnecessary literalness.

"‘Then it blew shut *without* wind,’ asserted Morgan sharply. ‘Your play again, Tracy.’

"We played for several minutes in silence, then Rees spoke. ‘Queer country!’ he soliloquized, as he straightened the wabbling candles. ‘Think of the fellow who built this house—alone here, day after day, night after night, fighting the solitude—and the ghastly silence!’

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" 'Maybe the pirates dropped in sometimes and cheered him up,' I suggested flipantly.

" 'He was dead before these pirates organized. The river-pilot told me this band began operating on the Yangtze only six months ago,' said Morgan.

" 'I don't believe that pirate yarn,' volunteered Tracy, and paused suddenly. 'What was that?' he whispered.

" 'From directly beneath us came the sound of a heavy object stealthily rolled.

" 'Morgan jumped up. 'We *are* bright!' he said with withering sarcasm. 'Did any one notice, this afternoon, whether there is a cellar under the house?'

" 'None of us had.

" 'I'm not going to prowl around this huge barracks looking for a cellar at this time of night,' growled Tracy stubbornly.

" 'With only two half-burned candles for four of us,' I supplemented.

" 'Morgan sat down and took up his cards.

" 'It was the echo from some river-boat,' I explained in shamefaced apology. 'Your deal, Tracy!' I added sharply.

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"Morgan broke the ensuing silence. 'Never before was I in an empty house that didn't *seem* empty; if I hadn't been all over it I'd say this house was *full* of people,' he soliloquized complainingly, and stared, wide-eyed, into the dark hall.

"'We once had a colored cook named Maud; she used to tell the awfulest ghost-stories! I can see her now—rolling her eyes and muttering, "What—does—I—see? Bl—o—o—d!"' mimicked Tracy with painstaking attention to details.

"'Anybody but you would have better sense than to remember that story—at such a time as this,' growled Morgan irritably.

"'Why shouldn't he remember it?' I asked. 'Every sensible human being knows that there *can't* be such a thing as a ghost—' I stopped suddenly. Across the blackness of the hall *had there* been the glimmering white blur of a face? 'It's the candle-light,' I tried to reassure myself.

"Morgan's eyes were fixed intently on the open window, and now he spoke in a low, queer voice. 'I must say—it's awfully odd—but I can't get over the feeling that people

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we can't see—are watching us,' he remarked disjointedly.

"I glanced toward the window. Outside, through the empty sash, I could see the nearest hollyhocks. They struck in me a chill sense of alien treacherousness. I felt suddenly that, masquerading as kin to the gentle flowers at home, they had enticed me into something sinister. Surely, the serene hollyhocks in my mother's garden *could not* stand so defiantly erect against the waning moon; and, as I looked, the stalks bent sharply—I held my breath. The stalks jumped stiffly back into place. Whatever had moved them was creeping—along the ground.

"'What ails you? Dropping your cards all over the place!' demanded Rees.

"I gathered up my cards and played.

"'Why doesn't some one talk?' complained Tracy fretfully.

"'If you talked less and paid more attention to your game—' began Morgan. He stopped, his eyes narrowing intently; and I, following his glance, saw nothing; but on the veranda a board creaked with stealthy slowness and, as I shut my teeth to keep

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them from chattering, I fancied that I could hear the muffled sibilant hiss of feet sliding across the bare boards.

"Rees broke the silence. 'This is a queer country; nothing happens the way you'd expect it to! Now, at home no one could make me believe enough in ghosts to sit around like this, and wait! But here anything seems possible.' He paused and eyed Tracy's frightened face.


"Tracy moistened his lips. 'Just *how* do you expect a Chinese ghost to act?' he inquired.

"'Is there any stereotyped way for ghosts to perform?' asked Morgan sarcastically.

"'Why, yes! The books always say: "Suddenly a cold wind swept across the room," or, "Without warning, my hair, usually worn flat, stood straight up upon my tingling scalp,"' recited Rees.

"Tracy interrupted. 'Our colored cook, Maud, used to begin, "In the dark of the moon,"' he mimicked sepulchrally, but Morgan cut him short with: 'Can't you *ever* play in turn? Don't talk! Play!'

"We played three hands in silence—a



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silence that grew momentarily until it was louder than sound and loomed large, with a kind of menacing thickness, that shut down on speech. I felt suddenly cold in the warm summer air.

"Outside, a step on the veranda stairs creaked with sharp abruptness; it sounded startlingly loud, but this time no one made any comment until Rees, throwing down his cards, sprang up. 'I've had enough of this! I'm not afraid of anything I can *see*—but to sit in this spooky house hearing all sorts of queer noises! Why, even those hollyhocks—' he broke off.

"From the room above us came a scream which, as we jumped up, overturning and extinguishing the guttering candles, changed to a cry of sheer agony and terror.

"For a second we stood frozen into frightened immobility; then, stirred by the evident summons of that quickly silenced cry, we dashed noisily across the hall and up the steep stairs—to be caught, on the upper landing, in a jostling rush of silent men, running with incredible noiselessness, in wildest confusion. As I wheeled about, overwhelmed

with unreasoning terror, I realized that Tracy, Morgan, and Rees were fleeing ahead of me. With an inarticulate shout I caught my foot against some heavy object lying on the landing, and, carrying it with me, pitched headlong to the hall below.

"When I recovered consciousness darkness lay about me like an impenetrable pall; no tiny point of light showed anywhere.

"I moved; a sudden stab of pain restrained me.

"What had happened? Who had shouted for help?

"Where were Tracy, Morgan, and Rees? *What had I fallen over?* Where had those running men been hidden, and where had they gone? Why had they run? Were they ghosts? What had I done to my back when I fell to make it hurt so abominably? Why were the arm and side I was lying on so stiffly damp?

"And then, quite suddenly, so near me that I felt a shudder of sick, cold fear, I heard a shadowy movement—the almost inaudible muffled whisper of a hand moving cautiously



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along the plastered wall. Very slowly it advanced—paused—lingered a perceptible time above my head—moved on—hesitated—died away—and stealthily returned, while I, lying in a motionless crumpled heap, held my breath and longed for the power to muffle the loud beating of my heart. The ghostly sliding hand came near, but now I knew that no spectre wielded it, for a foot in a straw sandal barely brushed my cheek, and from above me came the sound of a little sharp, hissing intake of breath. This time the groping hand did not return. Silence closed down again.

“For a long while I lay motionless, afraid to breathe, but as the slow seconds crept by, the pain in my back grew to be unendurable. Cautiously I shifted my arm, waited for the paroxysm to subside, and, emboldened by the unbroken quiet, agonizingly changed my position.

“There was no answering sound. Little by little, stopping when the pain was too sharp, I laboriously raised myself on my elbow, and felt for my match-box.

“A faint movement came from the hall above; I stiffened into silence but nothing

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happened, and after a perceptible time I decided to try again. My match-box was crushed under me, and as I drew it forth its clammy adhesiveness came as a new cause for aggrieved incomprehension, which deepened into bewilderment when I tried to strike a match and found it crumpling into unresisting limpness against the flabby box; not until several useless matches had increased my mystification did I have the success of striking one into feeble light.

"At first it burned fitfully, but enough to show that the wall near me was splashed with curious dark stains. I glanced from my damp sleeve and the discolored match-box in my hand to where, around me, a widening pool of blood spread sluggishly across the hall. Half sick with terror I turned upon my elbow. Beside me, his limp, twisted body half upon the stairs, his head turned horribly back, his throat slit from ear to ear—dead—lay Carter. I stared at the little dangling charm that was to have brought him 'safely home.'

"At the top of the stairs a group of men with cruel, bestial faces crouched, motionless,

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behind the old priest whose talon-like fingers curved hungrily as his eyes met mine. He started forward.

"From the river-bank came a confusion of sounds; then the navigator's voice raised in an excited call: 'Carter! Sheldon! Where are you, boys?'

"The men on the landing faded noiselessly into the shadows. I could never prove that I had really seen them.

"The rescuing party from the *Shenandoah* examined the whole place," said the admiral grayly. "They only found one clew: the barrel and kegs we had used for a table and seats during our card game were gone; otherwise the house was as bare, as innocently non-committal, as a sheet of still water, and in the garden a legion of flaunting hollyhocks raised unbroken, flowering stalks to greet the dawn.

"The navigator, sitting among them on a stone bench after the futile search, shook an impotent fist toward the house, and spoke brokenly.

"'Carter came to me just after you re-

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turned to the ship yesterday afternoon, and wanted me to help him play a practical joke. My part was to send for him to come back—supposedly to fix a compass—just as he was starting with you last evening for The Hollyhocks.

“‘I’m not enthusiastic over such jokes, Carter,’ I told him, but he laughed me down.

“‘They’re going there really half expecting to see a Chinese ghost!’ he chuckled. ‘The Hollyhocks is a big, lonely house, and when they’ve been in it an hour they’ll begin to feel sort of spooky. I’ll start about then in another sampan, sneak up through the garden, creep up those outside stairs, get in through a window, and, after yelling and making a racket over their heads, dash down the stairs and guy them! Can’t you *hear* old Rees trying for the rest of his days to explain *why* he ran?’

“The navigator groaned remorsefully. ‘Carter was late in starting—the mail from the States was put aboard by an up-river steamer; it had been four months on the way and Carter stopped to read his letters. If only I had stopped him!’ said the navi-

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gator with bitter emphasis. 'But how could I know that he was going to jump into the middle of the pirate gang? When he yelled—to scare you—they undoubtedly thought he was one of the river-police summoning his assistants; and the pirates would infinitely prefer a fight to the death to being captured.

" 'The fact that you lads didn't prowl about, and that Sheldon's fall knocked him into silence, probably saved your lives. But poor Carter—' The navigator covered his eyes with his hand; then started up. 'Anyhow, we'll get the old priest,' he said tensely.

"But when, through our testimony, the Chinese officials went to investigate the accumulation of bales and boxes in the temple storehouses, they found the old priest with stolid, unwavering eyes offering thanksgiving before the altar of the Goddess of Mercy for the miraculous preservation of her shrine from the devastating fire that had, just before dawn, gutted the storerooms. Indeed, even then the great, golden Kwanyin looked with serene, uncognizant indifference through a drifting cloud of smoke. Shortly afterward

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the old priest disappeared; I never heard just how they disposed of him.

"The drastic measures taken by the Chinese officials broke up piracy in that section for all time. Since then pirates have flourished, intermittently, on other Chinese rivers, but never in the Yangtze valley——"

The admiral paused, and continued slowly:

"Blown down from the table to the deck in Carter's cabin on the *Shenandoah*, Rees found a letter: 'Your son, John Howland Carter, Junior, was born to-day.' The words stared up as they straggled weakly across the unfolded page. It had arrived the evening before—but the date was four months old."

The admiral unfolded the service paper he held, and pointed to a paragraph in it. "Captain John Howland Carter to command the *New Mexico*," I read.

"You asked if I had seen a ghost? I knew that Carter's son had entered the navy, but I had lost track of him—the years pass so swiftly! And now he is forty-eight years old and goes to command a dreadnought—and I am an old man!" The admiral smiled—a

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wistful, pathetic smile—and sat looking intently at the crowded avenue. Across the way the florist's assistant had finished his task; the show-window was abloom with the exotic lavender of hothouse orchids. The admiral regarded them with uninterested eyes. "I can't tell one flower from another—except hollyhocks; *but I know them every time,*" said the admiral, and lapsed into silence.

I made several comments, but he did not seem to want to talk any more. I was disappointed! You see, I've been through such a lot of bother with my house, and more especially with my garden, that I wanted to know whether he ever found out any more about that Scotch fellow—the one that had, originally, built and owned The Hollyhocks.

## VIII

### THE DAY

WHEN representatives of foreign governments visit the United States it is customary for our State Department, through the Secretaries of the Army and Navy, to order two officers of junior rank to act as aides to each visitor during his stay in this country.

To these aides falls the task of verifying all engagements and of accompanying the visiting dignitaries to all official and semi-official entertainments given in their honor. During the days of their stay an aide's wife hears of her husband through the medium of the daily papers; he is so busy that she rarely sees him.

Perhaps because Lieutenant Gordon left on a destroyer for England and the North Sea patrol very soon after that Sunday at Mount Vernon, his little son—in the days when the color faded from mother's cheeks and her eyes grew big from scanning the



newsless newspapers, or watching for infrequent letters—used often to ask: “Tell me about *The Day*—that day on the *Mayflower*.”

And when she had finished, and bedtime was near, mother would say: “The great Englishman and Frenchmen who put the wreaths on General Washington’s tomb were Mr. Balfour, Monsieur Viviani, and General Joffre; but I never heard the name of the officer who talked to me longest. Now it’s time for prayers—don’t forget about the little children like you, in France.”

But when he had sleepily asked for father’s safe return, and droned out his A-men, mother of these quieter days would say: “Go on, Junior.”

Drowsily he added: “Give . . . peace . . . in our time, O Lord. . . . And take not . . . thy holy spirit . . . from us.”

Mrs. Gordon, sitting on the edge of a taxicab seat, realized, as she drew near the navy-yard gate, that the police were holding back great crowds of people who overflowed into the road at curbs and corners and peered

expectantly into carriages and limousines. Everywhere the air was full of the bright flutter of waving flags.

Was it—*could it*—be possible that she, the wife of a lieutenant in the navy, was really going to this celebration about which the newspapers from the Atlantic to the Pacific were telling their readers?

She had never even dreamed of such an opportunity, when her husband, who was acting as aide to one of the visiting commissioners, had telephoned the evening before: "Mollie! What *do* you think? The secretary has just asked me if you would like to go down to Mount Vernon to-morrow on the President's yacht—the *Mayflower*. There's to be a ceremony at Washington's grave, and about a hundred people are asked.

"I told the secretary you'd be only too glad to go, and he gave me a card for you to present at the navy-yard gate. Be there by 12.45. . . . What? . . . Of course you can leave Junior for one afternoon!"

Mrs. Gordon gave a happy sigh and looked out of the taxicab window. The crowds were greater; two limousines swept past

into line ahead, slowing down to enter the single-team gate of the navy-yard. There a double line of marines, police, and secret service men examined cards and scrutinized the bearers.


"Straight ahead to the river—then two squares to the right," the sentry directed, and they were off, down a wide paved road, in the wake of a smart victoria; but not before Mrs. Gordon was conscious that from the crowds far outside the gate there was arising a faint, swelling cheer.

The taxi sped on, reached the water street, swung round a wide circle, and slowing down, crept on in fitful jerks, and stopped. The door opened; Mrs. Gordon found herself ascending the *Mayflower's* gangway, and at the top shaking hands with the Secretary of the Navy.

"I am Mrs. Gordon," she volunteered shyly.

"Your husband isn't here yet—he'll come with the commissioner," said the secretary kindly.

Mrs. Gordon walked to the rail where she could watch the arriving guests; beyond her



the band stood ready; side-boys awaited the signal of a boatswain's mate; forward, the sailors of the *Mayflower's* crew watched silently.

Carriages and automobiles arrived intermittently. Two admirals and a general in uniform; four British officers in khaki; a member of the cabinet, his wife and two daughters; six French officers in light-blue uniforms and red caps. Then a pause, and a touring-car full of secret service men preceded a limousine; from it stepped a tall man with a ruddy, kindly face and white hair, who, as the band played the opening bars of the English national anthem and every one stood at salute, advanced up the gangway holding his silk hat. Following, came two officers and a younger man in the uniform and the small peaked cap of the Royal Flying Corps.

On deck the sentries presented arms, the eight side-boys stood at attention, while the boatswain's mate finished piping only to begin again immediately as the band swung into the "Marseillaise," and a small man with dark hair and eyes followed the

English commissioner up the sloping gang-plank.

Mrs. Gordon, flushing with interest and enthusiasm, leaned against the rail. "How nice it is to be unimportant and not know any one! I don't have to miss a thing," she thought happily.

A few more motors and carriages full of officers in uniform and ladies in tailored suits deposited their passengers at the gangway. On deck people talked together, or were presented to the two officials. About one o'clock came a lull in the arriving vehicles, and then, far away, the rumble of a rising cheer that grew nearer, swelled to great volume, and suddenly stopped.

"That's the marshal! Now he's inside the navy-yard gate," commented an officer.

People gathered at the rail; a group of navy-yard workmen stepped forward and began to clap as three automobiles turned the corner and sped up to the *Mayflower*. From the first one the secret service men sprang out, but from the second an officer in a blue coat, red breeches, gold-embroidered cap, and leather puttees descended smiling, saluted

the sentries, and started up the gangway to the strains of the French national anthem, while on deck all officers stood at salute.

Mrs. Gordon leaned forward. Behind the marshal some aides followed; then from the third motor-car a man swung himself down and with difficulty clambered up the sloping walk. His uniform was blue; his tam-o'-shanter cap sat rakishly on the back of his head; but as the crippled legs carried him haltingly up the gangway, his eyes, brave and undaunted, beamed with an unquenchable smile.

He would go walking agonizingly all his days! Mrs. Gordon felt blindly for her handkerchief.

"Hulloa, Mollie! What on earth are you crying about?" asked a cheerful voice. "Here, wipe your eyes." Lieutenant Gordon, laughing, stood beside her and offered his handkerchief.

"When did you come aboard? I didn't see you! But, oh, that lame officer—the one that smiles," she exclaimed.

"The Chasseur Alpine? Don't cry about him! His spirit is forty feet high, and has

wings. Besides, he says that the best part of him is American—that's his artificial leg."

Mrs. Gordon choked. "I could bear it better if he wasn't so cheerful," she said.

"We're off! Let's go down and get something to eat while I'm not needed. I'll have to leave you to shift for yourself after luncheon and at Mount Vernon," explained Lieutenant Gordon as they joined the group moving toward the companionway.

Lowering his voice, he added: "Don't be afraid to talk with any one who speaks to you. Foreigners don't bother about introductions like Americans. The fact that you're both at the same party is enough for them. Just forget about being shy, Mollie."

Mrs. Gordon was saved from answering by the crowd that engulfed them at the door of the dining-cabin. It was a "stand-up" luncheon and she waited while her husband helped the other men to distribute plates or juggle with cups and glasses.

"Here, Mollie," he said, bringing her some salad. "I'll be back in a minute—yes, sir—" he turned quickly, and Mrs. Gordon, glancing up, met the kindly smile of the great

marshal and saw the hand outstretched from the many-starred cuff.

"I have pleasure to tell you, Madame Gordon, how expediently your husband looks out for us," said the marshal in French; and she stammered a few words of thanks. But after he had passed on Mollie Gordon carefully removed her white glove and put it in her pocket. "If only I can remember every little thing about to-day to tell Junior, when he's old enough to understand!" she thought earnestly.

Afterward, sitting alone on deck, she watched the shore, lovely in its springtime green, slide by, and overheard scraps of conversation.

The bird-man was enlarging on the joys of flying to a lady who owned to an unreasoning terror when looking down from high places.

"It makes me dreadfully ill," said the lady plaintively.

The aviator was cheerful. "When you get up six thousand feet you wouldn't mind. Of course sometimes when you turn quickly and one wing stands vertically above your



head, and you look straight down the other wing onto the roofs of a town below, you *mightn't* like it," he explained.

The lady gasped. "If I was as ill—in proportion—when I was up six thousand feet as I am when I'm up six stories . . ." she commenced, and shuddered, "you can't imagine *just* how ill I am," explained the lady.

On the other side of Mrs. Gordon a girl tried in halting French to explain the time-honored story of Washington and the dollar that was skipped across the Potomac.

"C'est une joke Américaine," she told the puzzled Frenchman. "Nous disons: une dollar went quatre temps as far, dans those jours."

The officer looked grave. "Then costs of living have been of a height always, in your country? Potatoes, four dollars a bushel—in the days of Washington!" he exclaimed, and shook his head at the lovely shore of this incredibly expensive land.

The news of the *Mayflower's* coming had preceded her; every tiny pier or anchored boat seemed filled with cheering people, until,

at last, on a long stretch of river road they saw the black mass of many parked automobiles and heard the shrill roar of their horns.

A French officer leaning against the rail turned and spoke directly to Mrs. Gordon: "A picnic?" he asked, and pointed toward the motors.


Perhaps because the eyes under the red cap were both sad and gentle Mrs. Gordon forgot to be shy.

"Oh, no," she answered; "they've come to see the *Mayflower*—and you officers—go past."

The Frenchman looked astounded. "It is long since I have seen people who go as they like, when they wish," he said, and looked at the noisy cars, until a turn in the river hid them.

Leaving the rail he sat down by Mrs. Gordon: "Your people—I think they do not realize—how bad it is in my country," he said sadly.

Mrs. Gordon felt suddenly sorry for him. "You see, we only *read* about it," she explained, "and, of course, the newspapers exaggerate so often that you never can tell if what you read is true."



She paused. "Some of the things have been so dreadful that they *couldn't* be true. I *won't* believe them," said Mrs. Gordon.


"They couldn't tell all the truth—nor a quarter of it," said the Frenchman bitterly.

"But, of course, burning villages, and fighting, and all the terrible things that have happened are war," said Mrs. Gordon hesitatingly. "People tell of horrors, but they always finish by saying that they've read of it, or some one has told them. And the stories grow with each repetition."

The Frenchman looked at her. "I have *seen*," he said; "but you—perhaps the suffering of women or little children seems to you justified by war?"

Mrs. Gordon flushed. "No," she answered gently; "if only things are true I want to sympathize—and help—with all my strength. But does anything justify war? How I *hate it!*" she cried.

The officer was silent; then as if rousing himself from painful thoughts he spoke slowly: "Until war was declared I had lived all my life in what is now the invaded portion of France. Our château stood on the rising



ground above a small village; it has seen many armies pass, has looked upon much unhappiness, and known dark times during the long years.

"Do you know the old châteaux of France, madame ?

"White walls, mullioned windows, sharply slanting roofs, pointed towers—and the old gardens! All very dear to you when they have belonged also to your father's father.

"And every acquisition or addition—the new wing, some coveted acres of farm land—one makes sacrifices gladly that one's grandchildren may say: 'That my father's father secured,' or 'The wing was built during the reign of Louis XIII.'

"My home was like that; very old, very serene, very beautiful above its sloping gardens where peacocks sunned themselves among the flowers.

"Ahead the years stretched in happy promise for us—my young wife, my little son, and I—in our home.

"That is over.

"If peace were declared to-morrow it would make no difference."

He paused, and looked at the grassy shore smiling in the spring sunshine.

"This is like a dream to me," said the French officer.

He raised his tired eyes—eyes through which a suffering soul asked "why" of an unanswering universe.

"Perhaps the other is just a nightmare—from which I shall waken to find everything as before?" he asked pitifully, and shivered in the warm air.

Mrs. Gordon sat very still.

"You are kind to listen," said the officer. "Somehow, as I look at your happy people I feel that they do not even faintly realize how very bad it is in my country, and I want to shout to them of our women and of our little suffering children. . . .

"I joined my regiment on that August day, nearly three years ago; my wife stayed in her home, bravely bidding me farewell, and telling me that she could very well look out for the farms and the peasant women in the village. . . .

"How clearly half-forgotten details return when life means one long remembering. . . .

"We had in our hamlet an old woman—crazed since those days in '70 when she saw her young husband slain—Joan her name, quite harmless she was, and very old; those who may not think, live long—is it not so, madame? And always old Joan carried with her the musket and ammunition pouch of her dead husband. So usual on summer evenings was the sight of her walking up and down, the gun over her shoulder, that even the children gave no attention to her. . . .

"On the day when I left to join my regiment she appeared at the long window of the morning-room, her eyes blazing, her shrunken figure miraculously tall, and pointing to my wife and child bade me bid them good-by.

"‘You go!’ she cried shrilly, and dropped her voice to a fearful whisper; ‘they come—like waves of the sea, or leaves of the forest-trees driven before a wind. I . . . can hear them! Bid her . . . and your son . . . farewell.’

"Lifting the old musket she seemed to listen; moaning she turned away.

"‘Poor soul! The gossip of the village

has brought back to her dim mind memories of the old days. I must take care of her,' said my wife.

"My wife . . . if I had known, as I bade her *au revoir*, would I . . . could I . . . have left her?


"Almost at the first our hamlet was suddenly surrounded and taken. No message or letter ever reached me during the long months; I have known what it is to suffer, madame, but my imagination was too feeble to picture what had really happened.

"Twice the enemy have occupied our village—once advancing, once retreating—and at last came a day when I could again visit it. . . .

"I could hardly find it. . . .

"Only by the roofless ruins of the church could I tell. My home lay a tangled mass of twisted iron and jagged granite, where already the trampled trellises of climbing roses were sending long tendrils over the piles of masonry.

"In the village no house remains—only sometimes a whitened skeleton, bleaching in the sun and rain, among the crumbling bricks . . . and living in the ruins of the church, our



old curé, like a hunted animal . . . fearing the light of day. When he saw me he covered his face with his shaking hands.

"I hardly knew my own voice as I asked him: 'My wife and baby——?'"

"'Dead,' he whispered, 'long dead.'"

"Little by little he told me the story: When the peasant women found escape impossible they fled with their children to our château. Old Joan and the curé followed. Very soon officers of the enemy came, demanding quarters, in voices both suspicious and brutal. My wife faced them calmly.

"'We are but women in this house; our young children are in the rooms above. Of food there is very little,' she told them.

"But already the older officer was looking closely at her; very young and fair, she seemed, against the faded tapestries of the hallway. On the landing behind her the peasant women were suddenly very still, and the curé, seeing the officer's leering glance, feared for her, and stepped forward.

"'I am the priest of madame's church,' he said; 'perhaps if you will tell me what is needed——'"



"Cursing, the officer turned and shouted an order; violent hands were laid upon the curé—who is old—and he was hustled outside; but even as he went a scream from the women on the stairs made him turn his head and shout a warning. Above, on the high balcony, crazy Joan, attracted by the noise, had watched and listened; then, with care, levelled and fired the old musket. . . .

"My wife fell. Only in her brave, agonized eyes could you read the terror voiced in the whispered words: 'My baby!'

"The officer hardly noticed her; he was beside himself with anger and fear.


" 'That shot was meant for me! We'll teach these women better than to shoot at His Majesty's officers,' he shrieked. . . .

"Of what happened to the living women the curé refused to speak. Hiding his face in his shaking hands he could only weep the difficult tears of age and terror.

" 'But the children,' I cried, 'the weak, unoffending children. . . .?'

"Tears coursed down the curé's face.


" 'They were locked in that upper room—those who did not starve to death, perished



in the bombardment of the château, for the soldiers looted and fired on it as they were going,' said the curé.

" . . . Before I left him we went together into the ruined, roofless church, and as I turned from the empty holes that had been the great windows, to where above the high altar the crucifix hung, I started back in horror. They had hacked the carved Christ from the cross, and nailed in his place a black cat; everywhere . . . blood-stains showed how the poor animal had pitifully tried to tear itself free. . . ."

The officer paused; the knuckles of his clinched hand showed white against the blue of his uniform, his voice dropped to a whisper: "Those people have no mercy on women, children, or dumb beasts—nor any fear of God," he said, and the look of suffering came back into his heavy eyes. "But whenever I am alone—when I waken in the night, or stand in the quiet of your peaceful country . . . she calls to me—my wife. And plainly I can hear the pitiful wail of a starving, wounded baby . . . and know that it is . . . mine."



He stopped and looked about dazedly. "Forgive me, madame," he said, "I have no right . . . to burden you with my sorrows. But what is this?"

The ship's bell had commenced to toll.

"We are passing Washington's tomb," said Mrs. Gordon; about them every person was rising to their feet. Slowly and sweetly the bugle sounded taps; clearly it echoed across the placid river to where, on the hillside, a white house gleamed in the serene sunshine; below it showed the roof of the simple vault of brick wreathed in ivy and blossoming wisteria, and surmounted on this day by the flags of England, France, and America.

On the deck of the *Mayflower* statesmen and officers stood with bared heads or at salute while the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner" rang out across the waiting launches, and echoed back from the hillside dotted with the white-and-pink of blossoming trees.

And later, when Mrs. Gordon had listened to the short martial speeches and had seen the English and French representatives pass under the lifted grating to lay upon the tomb


a great circle of lilies and oak leaves, and the bronze wreath and palm-branches consecrated by long usage to the heroic French dead, she stood for a few minutes to look silently, absorb, and remember always every detail pertaining to this historic afternoon, and noticed for the first time a marble slab let into the wall above the tomb.

"I am the resurrection and the life."

The beautiful words come deathlessly down the years; but most often he who spoke them urged pity for the oppressed, and always, with insistence, he demanded kindness to little children.

Mrs. Gordon felt a sudden tightening in her throat; all the glamour of this wonderful day was swept aside by an overwhelming wave of longing for her quiet home, her husband, and her baby.

But through a blur of tears she saw the flags of France, England, and America waving together over the tomb of Washington, and knew that the road along which women shall go until "wars shall cease" was to be hers—already her feet were set on its tortuous pathway.



## I X

### HOLDING MAST

FROM the register of the United States Navy the wooden ships are gone, with *John Paul Jones*, *Decatur*, and *Farragut*, to some serene harbor beyond the most distant horizon line, and of the ship life of their day but one custom persists.

It was the rule on those old sloops of war that any sailor under arrest, awaiting sentence and having a complaint to make or a grievance to air, took his stand *by the main-mast*, and asked to speak with the captain; this was his right.

The white sails are gone. On our great steel ships no sign of them remains, but every day, at a given hour, on each dreadnought, battleship, cruiser, and destroyer of the United States Navy the captain "holds mast."

Seven bells.

On the quarter-deck of the gray dreadnought anchored in the harbor the morning

sunlight gleamed on a little group of sailors and petty officers who, as "witnesses," gathered and formed in line for the morning's mast.

Around the great triple gun-turret the master-at-arms marched the prisoners, two by two, and lined them up at right angles with the witnesses.

"Don't be forgettin' that you steps forward and takes off your cap when your name's called, and don't look scared to death—there ain't no can-o-bulls present," admonished the master-at-arms. "Say what you've got to say, and when you're ordered to 'stand aside,' put your cap on and step back into line. This ain't no trial! It's just a chance for you to tell your side of things."

The prisoners eyed him silently, except one youth who inquired of his neighbor in a surly whisper what was "th' use of tellin' the captain anything? Nuthin' happens to him like happens to us!"—then transferred their attention to the yeoman with the report book, who took his place just as the executive officer crossed the deck and knocked at the door of the captain's cabin.

"Mast is ready, sir," announced the executive, and waited, while the captain finished signing some papers and took up his cap.

"I've gone over the case of that fellow who takes drugs," said the executive; "we've done all we can for him. The doctor says it's no use—he hasn't the backbone to quit; let him go ashore, and the same thing happens. Big mast this morning; but the other cases are the usual things."

The captain nodded. "I suppose when you have one thousand and thirty men, of the average age of twenty-one years, you can expect a fair amount of ingenuity for getting into trouble," he remarked as, followed by an orderly, they stepped out on the quarter-deck.

"Attention! Salute!" commanded the master-at-arms to the prisoners.

The captain returned the salute and, pausing, scanned the yeoman's report book. "Carry on," he said.

"Mark Simmons. Reported by the officer of the deck for overstaying liberty eight hours," read the yeoman.

The captain looked carefully through the





"Mark Simmons. Reported by the officer of the deck for overstaying liberty eight hours,"  
read the yeoman.





record. "First report against you in the three years you've been on this ship, Simmons. What kept you?"

The sailor shook his head.

"Were you drunk?" asked the captain.

Again the dumb head-shake.

"Anything to say?" suggested the captain.

"No, sir," answered Simmons faintly.

The captain hesitated, then turned away.

"James Collins. Charged with being asleep while on duty. Reported by the boatswain's mate in charge of the watch," read the yeoman.

The boy stepped forward and took off his cap.

"Sleeping on duty, Collins? What ailed you?" asked the captain.

"Nuthin', sir," the sailor answered. "This is my first cruise, and I just can't hold me eyes open—went to sleep standin' right up straight! I ain't never been near the ocean before, and I'm perishin' to sleep all the time."

"If every man went to sleep when he felt like it how long do you think this ship would

last?" asked the captain. "I'll have to give you a summary court, Collins, and remember this: if ever you are given an *important* post in war-time, and you sleep on it, you are liable to receive the severest punishment that can be inflicted."

"Stand aside," the master-at-arms ordered. Collins stepped back into line.

"Thomas Jenkins, Carl Jones, coal-passers, reported by the water-tender for fighting," read the yeoman.

"What were you fighting about?" asked the captain.

Jenkins, burning with righteous wrath, answered: "Every time I gets the bright work all shined up, he comes in and turns on the steam! Says 'he's tryin' out the valves,' and when I asks him why don't he try 'em out when the brasswork's dirty he laughs!"

"Well, Jones?" asked the captain.

Jones grinned unhappily. "Get tired o' seein' him forever at his polishin'—thought I'd give him something to polish *for*. He hit me first," asserted Jones, grasping at a straw.

The witness interrupted.

"They fights all the time," he volunteered virtuously. "I seen them fightin' the other day because Jenkins told Jones that no man that had red hair could ever be a good engineer. Said the admiral said so."

Jenkins flushed. "Aw, can't you take a joke?" he growled.

"How old are you, Jenkins, and you, Jones?" asked the captain, and smiled at the answers of "twenty."

"You can punish them *this time* by letting them shake hands for an hour on the quarter-deck," said the captain.

"Next," commanded the executive, and a white-faced man stepped forward in answer to the name of William Clark.

"Reported by the master-at-arms for taking cocaine," read the yeoman.

The captain glanced sharply at the trembling hand raised to remove the white cap.

"Is this true?" he asked.

The man nodded miserably.

"How and where did you form this habit?" asked the captain.

"I got to going with a crowd in Harlem three years ago, and some of the girls took


the stuff—said it was great and wanted me to try it,” said Clark in a low voice. “I enlisted to get away from them and quit it; but every time I go ashore I just can’t help buying it.”

The captain’s face clouded, but his voice was kind.

“I’m sorry for you, Clark,” he said. “Unless you are man enough to break this habit and start fresh, there isn’t any future for you anywhere. We can’t keep you here. The navy isn’t a reform school, and nothing spreads like a bad habit. I wish I could help you; but this is the time when you must help yourself. Cocaine is the entrance ticket to the insane asylum and to the gutter—and to nothing else.”

The list proceeded. “Smoking out of hours” was the most popular cause for getting on the report, although overstaying liberty, while communing with long-lost friends from other ships, ran it a close race.

One exuberant youth, reported for “continued spitting on the deck,” announced belligerently that he “couldn’t work if he couldn’t spit”; another frankly admitted an



aversion for vaccination; while a third vociferously defended his pastime of "sleeping in a life-boat" when he should have been working.

Stealing, the most contemptible sin in the community life aboard ship, was severely dealt with. The last case was finished.

"No more reports," announced the yeoman, closing the book and bundling his papers together.

"Attention!" commanded the master-at-arms to the prisoners.

The captain started across the deck toward his cabin, paused, and returned.

"Simmons—one moment," he said to the first prisoner.

The sailor stepped forward and lifted his heavy eyes to the captain's face.

"What is it, Simmons? Something you are afraid to tell?" asked the captain.

"My wife, sir," said the boy, and swallowed hard. "The baby came yesterday morning. . . . We had a civilian doctor . . . but he was drunk! They know we navy people haven't much money and aren't here long . . . so they think it don't matter how

they treat us. . . . I did all I could . . . but she had kind of chills. . . . I came back as soon as I dared leave her."

His shoulders shook; he leaned his face against his blue sleeve.

"Good Lord, man! Why didn't you tell that to the officer of the deck when you came aboard? Is any one with your wife? Is her home in this city?" demanded the captain.

"She's all alone in a lodging-house. Her folks live in San Francisco," answered Simmons.

The captain turned. "Ask Doctor Knapp to come here," he said to the orderly. And to the master-at-arms: "Erase that report against Simmons; he's going ashore with the doctor."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said the master-at-arms; he turned and faced the prisoners: "Right about! Forward—march!" he commanded.

Eight bells struck.

Above their clanging clamor came the clear notes of a bugle sounding mess-gear, and from the deck below arose a great clattering of plates. The band, which plays every day during the crew's dinner-hour, sailed val-

iantly into the opening bars of the "Anvil Chorus"; factory whistles in the near-by city shrieked their noonday greetings above the deep boomings of bells.

"My wife's been alone for five hours," said Simmons miserably.

Late that night the captain finished his writing and went over the doctor's report.

Mrs. Simmons and the baby had been moved to a hospital and were comfortable. Simmons, tremulous with gratitude, had returned to the ship and was sleeping the sleep of exhaustion, two decks below.

The captain leaned back in his chair. Facing him, on the shelf above, a woman smiled from a photograph—an old photograph, judging by the enormous sleeves and diminutive hat. How clearly he remembered the day that photograph was taken—just before he started on a Pacific cruise.

How they had laughed, and hoped, and planned even to deciding on the college which "junior" should eventually honor by his presence, with Wellesley as an alternative, if fate should prove disobliging.



"All was well" when he had cabled from Valparaiso; and even if he *had* worried during those days of cruising through the Straits of Magellan he had been pitifully unprepared for the cablegram awaiting him at Montevideo. Five words! Yet they told him that never again would he need to hurry home. . . .

The captain sighed. For a second the port-hole framed the stretching road of the long years; but somewhere, around a little turn, she would be waiting for him, the baby in her arms——

The captain smiled back at the photograph and, ringing for the orderly, switched off the desk lights.

## X

### THE WALL

"THEY have a palace with over three hundred rooms that, with the gardens, takes up a half-mile square. The old prince, his eight sons, and their wives and children live there. They have Eurasians, from the mission, to teach the children English; but I guess you'll be the first foreigner who ever got nearer than the wall. It's the real thing in walls!" asserted the Scotch captain of the Yangtze River steamer when Mrs. Allen told of her engagement and asked for directions.

And Marjorie Allen, rattling over the uneven road in a ricksha, agreed with him; the wall built of huge blocks of stone towered ten feet over her head, the bronze coping giving out sharp gleams in the afternoon sunshine.

"If Elsie Marvin could be dropped down here!" thought Marjorie, whimsically remembering Elsie's exasperated remonstrances

at receptions or dances in Washington, fifteen years before: "Why are you always bothering with that Chinese girl? She's stiff as a poker and stupid as an owl! Being at the embassy doesn't mean anything—she probably runs a laundry at home. You'll never go to China. . . . Why do you bother to be nice to her?"

"Poor Elsie wasn't a good judge of people," sighed Marjorie Allen, leaning forward to see the great gate revealed by a turn in the narrow road.

A servant, leaning against the massive barrier screening the opening, came forward. "Miss-ses Al-len?" he asked, and at her answering nod turned and shouted. Twice he repeated it before his voice penetrated the indescribable din, and the ponderous gates swung slowly back.

Marjorie Allen hesitated at the scene disclosed.

Piles of luggage, scores of servants, a heavy travelling-carriage with horses, a vermilion-lacquered chair and bearers, carved and gilded chests mingled in chaotic confusion; while mafoos and coolies lounged or, oblivious to

the uproar, slept, although the palace enclosing the stone-paved courtyard on three sides formed a sounding-board that echoed and re-echoed all sounds.

"What can it mean?" wondered Mrs. Allen, following her guide as he threaded his way toward an arched doorway, then down a long corridor paved with squares of white marble to a great carved screen. Stopping, he beckoned her to enter.

"Ong?" a voice questioned.

"Yes, excellency, and the American lady," the servant answered.

"How pleasant to again see you!" welcomed the princess cordially. "Very much I liked your writing me; all the long years rolled back and I saw once more the wide streets of Washington—and the embassy—and my dead uncle. Almost a dream seems that winter."

She spoke slowly, clearly, and very carefully. "Your mother? That kind and gentle lady! And your father—and the husband in the navy of America? Very happy am I that his ship comes to my country and gives me the sight of you."

Marjorie Allen smiled through a blur of tears. "Home seems very far away! Mother and father were well when I last heard; they will be interested to know that I have seen you. Mother always inquired about you, after you left Washington; your aunt told her of your marriage—that's how I knew where to write you."

The princess nodded.

"How interesting this is!" said Marjorie Allen enthusiastically; "your courtyard was like a Bakst setting."


"You discover us in confusion," explained the princess; "my brother-by-law and his new wife arrived but an hour ago. Their servants, I fear, still encumber the courtyard."

"How I wish I might have seen them!" cried Marjorie Allen enviously.

Palaces were a novelty—but a Chinese prince arriving with his bride!

The princess smiled.

"Will you sit here?" she asked, motioning to a carved bench in the deep window. Turning, she spoke in Chinese, and Mrs. Allen saw that they were not alone. In a shadowy



corner of the long room a woman sat huddled in a great chair beside a table, her face hidden against her arms.

Reluctantly she lifted her head, and Marjorie Allen gave a little sigh of tribute to her loveliness. From the magnificent pearls outlining the heavy pins in her blue-black hair to the points of her tiny embroidered slippers she was as exquisite as a flower. But Marjorie Allen's eyes wandered from the face that bloomed startlingly against the sombre panelling to the perfect hands—heritage of generations of idleness—that lay against the dark wood of the table.

The woman looked at her.

Heavy-eyed, she glanced unhurriedly at the visitor's tailored dress, plain hat, and English shoes.

She hid her head on her arms again.

"Oh, Aisan!" reproved the princess, turning apologetically to her guest. "My sister-by-law—Aisan—has no children; so to-day her husband brings home a second wife," she explained calmly.

Marjorie Allen gasped.

"How dreadful—how degrading! The poor

woman," she cried, looking compassionately at the motionless, bowed figure.

The princess seemed puzzled.

"I do not understand," she said; "there will be no poverty for Aisan. Life goes on the same, and would, if my brother-by-law brought home eight wives—or eighteen; there is plenty for all."


"But to ask her to live in the same house with the others! How can she bear it?" questioned Marjorie vehemently.

The princess sighed.

"Very thankful am I, during these days with Aisan, that my honored father so insisted on difficult books and the Confucian lessons that taught obedience and restraint," she said. "When I came from Washington very brave was I, and very determined to marry a poor young man who talked much. My father knew best! A husband whom you love—most miserable can he make you."

"No one likes having her husband won away, even if she doesn't love him," asserted Marjorie Allen.

"As for Aisan, soon, I think, she will laugh at these days; she has beauty, and that the



new wife has not," explained the princess calmly.

Marjorie Allen shuddered.

"But I forget," apologized the princess; "your steamer stops only a few hours, and time goes quickly. You might wish to see the palace? Or the gray garden? A famous one it is, in China—many hundreds of years old."

She glanced toward the silent figure in the chair, hesitated, and, crossing the room, spoke softly in Chinese. The woman neither looked up nor answered.

"Shall we go now?" she asked, turning. "My sister-by-law speaks no English," she added when, followed by servants carrying trays of teacups and bowls of salted watermelon seeds, they went slowly down the wide stone walk.

"What did you say to her—is there anything you could say that would comfort her?" asked Marjorie Allen, haunted by the dumb misery of the silent figure.

"I told her, to-day last not forever—already the shadows lengthen, and in the end it will not matter; but time was when I also



thought beauty everything! One of your friends that winter in Washington—very lovely she was—men waited in little groups to dance with her. I have wondered—is she happy?” she asked.

Mrs. Allen shook her head.

“What a coincidence that you should ask for Elsie Marvin!” she said. “No, she has had a miserable life. She divorced her first husband because of another woman; he pays her alimony . . . and she has been married and divorced twice since.”

“Alimony? Divorced?” questioned the princess. “Her husbands pay her?—and two other husbands?—and none dead? What are these things? I do not understand!” she cried.

“Oh, but only one at a time; it’s settled in court—the divorce, I mean! And two husbands, without a divorce, is bigamy—people go to prison for that. I don’t believe I can explain it,” said Marjorie Allen lamely.

“Courts and prisons are for coolies,” asserted the princess with quiet finality; “in palaces affairs are corrected by the head of the house. What happens, no one beyond

the wall knows. But look!" she said, stooping under the shallow circular opening. "You wished to see my brother-by-law and his new wife? A moment more and they would be gone."

Facing them stood a man, coarse, sensual, and supercilious, with the haughtiness of the Chinese great, and a girl, gay as a butterfly in her flowery brocade, her childish face radiating content as her hands wandered from the carved jade of her hairpins to the embroideries of her yellow dress. Her proprietary eye beamed approval on palace, garden, and wall.

"But how curious—no color or flowers!" cried Marjorie Allen.

Before her, paths of fine gray pebbles wound, or crossed on arching bridges the stone-lined course of a riotous brook; waterfalls broke into rainbows of spray on the gray rocks; a thatched tea-house showed its roof of slate-colored tiles over the thickets of silvery bamboo; willows trailed their ashen leaves in the murmuring water. It was like something seen by moonlight or in a dream.

The prince turned.

"You find it curious?" he asked. "Yet, perhaps some day your country may be as full of imitations of our gardens as it is now with horrible counterfeits of our porcelains and bronzes," he added insolently, and followed his wife through the low archway.

Marjorie Allen gasped. Consideration for women was not a grace the prince found worthy of cultivation, she reflected; yet guilty remembrance of "blue gardens," "rock gardens," "wild gardens," at home and in England, kept her silent. Could they be the first crude strivings for this perfect achievement?

"Shall we have tea now?" questioned the princess, leading toward the tea-house porch.

Marjorie Allen looked after the prince and his bride. "She'll never be unhappy here—while there are needlewomen and goldsmiths," she commented dryly.

The princess laughed. "Already you can see? And soon fault-finding with the servants or any who disturb her comfort," she prophesied.

"I've seen so many things to remember and think about to-day! The city gates—

this garden—and that wonderful old drum-tower on the way here; it's the most picturesque building I've ever seen."

"The drum-tower is not old—it was built in 1490," explained the princess; "but the temple you pass, just below our wall, nearly two thousand years has it stood; sometimes when I see the hawthorn blossoming, and remember the smallness of them when I came here, a long time it seems; but to the unchanging stars how recent must the temple appear! Does it teach indifference—or just patience?" she asked.

"How new my country must have seemed! Do you ever talk of it with your sisters-in-law?" asked Marjorie Allen.

"A pleasant memory—the clean, wide streets," praised the princess, and hesitated. "My sisters-by-law—only from the window of a chair or carriage have they seen your women and their clothes—useful they are but not beautiful, those dresses."

She smiled reminiscently.

"Long ago, I tried once to tell of evening dresses in your country—of the colors and slippers and trains and jewels. Most un-

happily, I told also of the low-cut necks and the dancing with men!"

The princess paused and shook her head.

"My husband's mother lived then; she forbade me ever so to speak again. Except that my family is a great one, I think she mourned a daughter-by-law who had looked upon such sights."

"What *would* she think of the dresses and dancing now?" thought Mrs. Allen.

There was silence.

"One's own country and its ways—to each seems most beautiful and best," apologized the princess gently.

With the obvious intention of amusing her guest she spoke of the skating club that had been a feature of the social life in Washington during her winter.

"My life—you see it—very quiet it is—and think how to me the upon-skates men and women seemed! Some had never before attempted it; they waved their arms; their feet went in ways they did not desire! One man from the embassy of England—often and heavily he sat upon the floor."

The princess smiled. "Very interested  
was I. Every time, until people skated

smoothly, I went; but never did the embassy-of-England man learn. He stopped trying. Kenton his name, and recently in the Shanghai papers I read that name."

"It is the same man," said Marjorie Allen. "Then he was naval attaché, now he is the admiral commanding their Asiatic squadron. He always was an idiot. I hear that he makes love to any pretty wife of a junior officer, and when they object, tells them 'not to be so middle class.' He has learned to guard against falls," she commented dryly.

The princess turned a bewildered face.

"I do not understand," she apologized.

"Tell me, please, of your aunt—is she near?" asked Marjorie Allen, hastily changing the subject. Glancing toward the garden, she saw that it was veiled in long shadows; a cold breeze stirred.

From a cage under the tea-house eaves a nightingale called mournfully to his faithless mate; the new moon curved faintly above the pointed pine-trees; far away the whip-poorwills voiced their dreary plaint.

Mrs. Allen rose. "We sail at seven—I must go," she said.

"Darkness comes quickly. I am sorry this

afternoon is gone," said the princess with a little sigh. "I am sending Ong—an old servant who speaks English—back to your boat with you. It is better that you should not go alone through the city, and with him you need have no fear. Also, will you take from me to your mother a little gift—and my good wishes?" she asked, opening the door into the great courtyard, empty now but for the two rickshas and their coolies.

"How kind of you—and how thoughtful! Mother will be *so* pleased; she will write you," said Marjorie Allen, warmed by the gentle courtesy.

The princess watched her get into the ricksha.

"Never again shall I see your country, but if once more you are in China——"

She stopped.

From the shadowy house a cry arose . . . a shriek of terror . . . the sound of a struggle . . . a voice raised sharply in wordless protest against unbearable agony . . . echoed and answered among the stones of the courtyard.

Slowly . . . the voice died to a gurgling moan; . . . gasping followed; . . . the demon

echoes whispered them gloatingly, sang them triumphantly, juggled them intricately, mumbled them faintly.

The palace awoke.

Heavy doors slammed; voices called; running, slippered feet clicked over stone floors; lights flashed out; a shutter over the princess's head was quietly closed. A babel of voices sounded, then a pause; and one quiet voice, tired and old but compelling.

The echoes ignored it.

Marjorie Allen unclasped her cold fingers.

"Something dreadful has happened," she whispered.

The princess lifted her head and spoke evenly. "Although I shall never again see your country and the wide, white streets of Washington, if you are in China I hope you will write me," she said. Only the knuckles of one clinched hand betrayed the knowledge of anything unusual.

From the arched embrasure a man's voice sounded, high, cruel, merciless with anger, and as the echoing courtyard seized it and gave it back, an ugly snarl ran through it. The voice paused, but the snarling echo went



on. The voice sounded again, but now it was muffled by the pathos of a woman's sobbing, in despair and anguish and helplessness, . . . that spoke and answered across the darkening courtyard. . . .

"Some dreadful accident has happened," breathed Marjorie Allen.

The door opened, and the old servant came out; trembling, he climbed into the waiting ricksha.

"So much have I enjoyed your visit," said the princess; "a happy memory—those old days! Good-by, and a safe journey."

The ricksha turned.

But even as the gates clanged behind them Marjorie Allen heard the despairing weeping and saw the princess standing motionless on the palace steps, while above her the night wind sounded its first whisperings among the sculptured dragons of the curving eaves.

She turned impulsively to the old servant. "Was some one hurt—what happened?" she asked.

"Her excellency—the Princess Aisan—dealeth death to the—new princess," he whispered feebly.

Straightening, he looked at this inquisitive alien woman.

"I—not—speak—English," he said clearly; and as they turned the corner he growled an order in Chinese, and his ricksha, dropping behind, followed through the dusk down the uneven roadway skirting the palace wall.

## XI

### GUAM—AND EFFIE

ARE you an American?

Then, of course, you know all about our island of Guam.

But if you don't: place an equal triangle on the Pacific Ocean with one point on Honolulu and one point on Yokohama; the third point will rest—approximately—on Guam.

Guam is a far-flung, remote sort of place, hundreds of miles off the paths of freight steamers or the trans-Pacific liners. Once a month, on the outward-bound trip to Manila, the army transport stops with the mail, provisions, and the shifting officers and men. On the return voyage the transport does not stop.

Since the capture of the island by the U.S. S.S. *Charleston* during our war with Spain, the governors of Guam have been officers of the United States Navy. The governor lives in the old Spanish "palace," but the junior naval officers find quarters where they can among the native houses in the capital city.

“The seat of the insular government of Guam and the home of 60 per cent of its inhabitants is at Agaña. Agaña is hot and damp and——”

But my preface is too long.

To Guam, on the March transport, came Lieutenant and Mrs. Hugh Meredith, recently married in New York, where Mrs. Meredith, as Effie Steadman, had graced the chorus of a successful musical comedy. The marriage had been a hasty one, following a courtship rendered incitingly difficult by Lieutenant Meredith's duties as aide to an admiral and Effie's conflicting rehearsals, matinées, and evening performances—a courtship with all the feverish, calculated glamour of the restaurants and tea-rooms where it was carried on.

In the end Hugh Meredith—to whom preference by the admiral came as easily as the generous allowance from home—brushed aside the barrier of difficult meetings and married Miss Steadman before a dignitary in the city hall.

The Hugh Meredith surveying the Eden-

like trees of Guam from the transport's deck was a considerably sadder and wiser person than the care-free hero of that whirlwind romance!

Events had quickly followed: The generous allowance from home ceased with stunning abruptness; indeed, judging by any approval or enthusiasm of his act from his family—except for one letter from his mother written during her first, white heat of anger—he might have been a kinless orphan! Curiously, too, the admiral suddenly needed an older aide, and the admiral's lively daughter stopped being “*always* at home at tea-time.” In less than two months life grew to be amazingly chilly to Hugh Meredith. His orders to Guam came as a real boon.

“I’ll be glad to go somewhere a long way off,” he told Effie, who regarded this new development as a sort of “going on the road,” and was neither pleased nor sorry.

“I like to travel, too,” agreed Effie. “Since I’ve gotten rested I’ve missed the theatre. The days are long when you haven’t anything to do. Sometimes when you come home, I can’t think of *a thing* to talk about!

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What sort of a place is this Guam? I need some new clothes—but, of course——”

“If I’d only saved when I could!” groaned Hugh. “But you won’t need new clothes in Guam,” he comforted.

And now, from the transport’s deck, a limp and seasick Effie viewed, with growing apprehension, her new home. “I’d never have believed *any* place could be so far from every other place and still be on the map,” she commented, looking back over the immense, flat Pacific.

“I’m going to make good here, if I work my finger-nails off,” said her husband with bitter emphasis. “Every one has fired me out to shift for myself; we’ll show them, won’t we?”

“They’ll need good eyesight,” volunteered the wavering Effie; “it looks so *lonesome*,” she amended forlornly. A nearer view was not reassuring. Effie lapsed into silence—a silence that deepened after Hugh had enthusiastically greeted an old friend and they were following him through the streets of Agaña.

“I didn’t know that you were here, Putnam! Where’s Alice?” Hugh asked.

Doctor Putnam's pleasant face clouded. "She's here, but she's been ill ever since our baby was born—dead—two months ago. I'm hoping to get her away as soon as she is able to travel," he said, and added briskly: "When I saw by a wireless message from your transport that you were coming to take Russell's job, I officiously engaged the house they were vacating, for you—with the two Chamorro servants and all. It's the best available, Mrs. Meredith; the Russells left some furniture and decorations, and my wife sent over enough provisions to last you until you get the hang of the native hucksters. She was sorry not to welcome you, but she hasn't seen any one yet." The doctor paused; then, as Effie did not speak, went on: "The houses are built on stilts because it is cooler and less damp, Mrs. Meredith, and then it gives you a place to keep a pig. You'll never realize what a useful animal a pig is until you see him working, twenty-four hours a day, around the native houses!"

"He's joking, Effie," whispered Hugh, across her uncompromising silence, as they followed the doctor down a narrow street.

"This is your mansion," said Doctor Putnam, running up the steps and opening the door.

"Three rooms—the kitchen is in that detached shed. You'll have to give the house boy an umbrella to carry over your food when it rains——"

Effie, still silent, stood looking about the small bare rooms.

"Russell left you some books—nothing very modern, but you won't mind that when you've been here a little while. Those machetes and that old Chamorro idea of a revolver were hung up there for ornaments by a man who had this house five years ago. Russell warned me to tell you not to try to use the gun, Meredith; he told me that he took a shot at a bat once with it, and it not only kicked like a mule but it back-fired so that he still carries the scars!

"Russell's two Chamorro servants aren't much good, but none of the others are any better. Hope you haven't brought a lot of wedding presents, Mrs. Meredith; the house boys here haven't the least idea of how to treat silver."

"I haven't," vouchsafed Effie grimly.



Doctor Putnam paused awkwardly, then tried a new subject. "Alice heard from your sister last month, Meredith, but she didn't mention you! If she'd only told us that Mrs. Meredith was coming I could have held a better house for you."

"I'm sure this one will do—won't it, Effie? Who else is here besides Alice and you?" asked Hugh hurriedly.

"Major Forde, of the marines— Yes, Pedro!" he called to a boy clad in a jumper of thin material that hung, wide and full, to the hips of his cotton trousers. "They want me at the dispensary," explained Doctor Putnam after questioning him. "Good-by, Mrs. Meredith. About settling with Russell—" His voice trailed off from the road.

Hugh Meredith came slowly back into the room where Effie stood. Outside, from a palm-tree, a rose-colored fruit dove called across the warm stillness a low, insistent, mournful plaint, and, from far away, came the subdued, languorous, answering notes; the heavy air seemed throbbingly full of the bubbling, melancholy sound.

Effie turned. "How long are we to stay here?" she demanded huskily.

"You're worn out by the long sea voyage," her husband evaded. "Guam is beautiful; you'll like it after you get used to it! Come and have a look at the pink dove that is making all that racket—he's some bird——"

"Are the Merediths receiving?" called a voice from outside. "Welcome to our metropolis!" laughed a newcomer from the doorway. "Haven't seen you since Washington, four years ago, Meredith! How are your mother and sister? My regards to them when you write. I *was* surprised when I heard that you were coming here! Please present me to—er—Mrs. Meredith."

Hugh, without enthusiasm, greeted the voluble visitor. "Effie—Major Forde," he said.

"So sorry Mrs. Forde isn't here—but I couldn't ask her to bury herself. Are you from Washington, Mrs. Meredith?" inquired the major.

"No," answered Effie.

"My wife is from New York," vouchsafed Hugh.

"Fine place!" commented the major with

heartily approval. "No place like it! You'll find it lonely here unless, of course, you have a hobby. Cards? Embroidery? Piano? Or perhaps you go in for the high-brow stuff?" He looked about. "Books, already!" he observed, and read the titles: "Tennyson! Rossetti! Oh, dear me!" wailed the impressionable major.

"Some books that Russell left," said Hugh.

"Glad they aren't yours!" approved the major. "I'm looking forward to seeing a great deal of the Merediths," he explained. "Mrs. Putnam is very ill—the doctor hopes to take her home soon—so I'm your only link with the past," he explained, and waited.

"You're very kind," agreed Hugh lamely. There was a pause. The major broke it with effusive querulousness.

"Where *have* I met you before, Mrs. Meredith?" he inquired. "Your face is perfectly familiar to me! Haven't I seen you somewhere? You don't, by any chance, play on the violin—or something?"

"Effie sings a little," volunteered Hugh hastily.

The major looked about. "And no piano!"

he lamented, rising. "I have to hunt up some old friends on the transport—but, of course, I came to welcome you first! Hope you like me, Mrs. Meredith; you're going to see me early and often," he promised playfully. Hugh went with him to the door. "Don't forget to remember me to your mother and sister," the major reiterated.

"Did he know' your people well?" questioned Effie curiously.

Hugh glanced at her. "No," he answered. "I doubt if he ever really met them. Mother and Eleanor wouldn't care for his sort." He hesitated. "Alice Putnam, the doctor's wife, is one of my sister's best friends. You'll like her. She's a great reader. I'm hoping you'll get a love for books here, Effie. You'll be glad always if, instead of playing cards or idling, you take up a regular course of study. It isn't lonely when you're busy. I'll have to be away lots; up to now I've sailed along without effort, but from now on what I get I'll have to earn—" He paused. "*What is it, Effie?*" questioned Hugh Meredith.

She turned tensely. "The scraping—and that queer moan—what are they?"

He listened. "A palm-leaf against a corner of the house, and the waves on the beach," he laughed.

The fruit dove had flown away; already the swift afternoon sunlight was waning, and bats, on slanting black wings, sailed leisurely across the sky. The Chamorro house boy sauntered into the dining-room and, after a few colloquialisms, announced that dinner would be ready in a half-hour. Outside a heavy, dry palm-leaf sawed intermittently against the wall; on the beach the waves broke slowly and spread with a sluggish sibilance on the hot sand. Otherwise it was very still.

The etiquette of all naval stations is the same. New arrivals cause a spasmodic ripple of entertaining, only equalled by the crowding hospitalities proffered when an officer, his wife, and his family move on. At Guam this is regulated by the arrival or departure of transports. Between times the uneventful days march lazily past.

To Effie Meredith they seemed to crawl with increasing slowness. She did not "take"

with the card-playing set, and after the first tentative calls they left her to herself. The governor's wife was pursuing a vision of presenting Guam to the world by means of a set of water-color sketches, on which she arduously toiled. She soon discovered that Effie's knowledge of art was negligible.

"I asked her if she didn't consider water-color the most brilliant and satisfactory medium, and she answered that she thought grease-paint best. *Could* she have been attempting to be facetious?" confided the governor's wife to a friend, with growing stiffness. "I can't *quite* understand how that nice Meredith boy happened to marry such a girl. She doesn't know his people—I asked her!" commented the "ranking lady."

Major Forde, more temperamentally devoted, had also informed himself on that point. He "stopped in" almost every afternoon, and although Effie did not like him, he was "some one to talk to."

"You don't know Washington, then?" questioned the major during his third visit; "but some day you will see it most delight-

fully with Meredith's mother and sister. Charming people, aren't they?"

"I've never seen them," vouchsafed the literal Effie.

"Hm'm," commented the major, and paused. "My wife often writes of them," he added, sipping the lemonade Effie had hesitatingly proffered.

Conversation languished.

"Meredith says that you sing," observed the major, and experimented with a sudden question. "Professional?" he inquired boldly.

"Yes," answered Effie without embarrassment.

The major's "Hm'm" spoke volumes. He glanced around the bare rooms from the small stand, covered with a table-napkin and adorned with a pitcher filled with telosma, to the group of native weapons on the wall. "Must be lonely for you here," he said.

"It is," agreed Effie. "I'll be glad when Mrs. Putnam gets better. I'm going to see her, for the first time, to-morrow."

"*Why* is Mrs. Putnam bothering?" won-

dered the major. The Chamorro boy sauntering in to set the table roused him. "I must be going," he said.

Effie, loitering in the doorway, heard the haunting call of a reed-warbler, ineffably sweet on the quiet evening air. The sea was so calm that the lazy surf made no sound, but against the wall a palm-leaf rasped with indolent persistence.

"I always believed, when I lived in New York, that a house and servants were the finest things in the world. Well, now I've got them!" thought Effie, and saw the golden landscape through a blur of tears.

Hugh came cheerily up the steps. "It's great, isn't it?" he asked enthusiastically. "I'm never too tired to enjoy my walk home. Didn't I see Forde coming away from here? I wouldn't bother much with him, Effie; he isn't worth while. Dinner, Pedro?"

Mrs. Putnam smiled feebly at her visitor, and glanced nervously toward the desk, where the corner of an embittered letter from Mrs. Meredith, senior, showed from a pigeonhole. "I'm sorry I've been such a poor neighbor,"



she said. "Are you comfortable? Is there anything we can do to help you out? I was so ill when you came that I had to leave all arrangements to the servants."

Effie smiled back. "We have everything going smoothly now. You've been *so* kind! Whenever anything especially good comes on the table Hugh asks, 'From Mrs. Putnam's?' and it always is from you. You've trained your cook wonderfully!"

Mrs. Putnam laughed. "You should have seen my early struggles," she said. "I've been so thankful that my Quaker grandmother made me learn to cook!"

Effie's face sobered. "I wish I knew how! I can boil potatoes and fry beefsteak—but that isn't cooking. And I can't sew. In New York, or on the road, I had no time, and ready-made things are cheap—the kind I bought," she said.

Mrs. Putnam turned on her pillows. "Tell me—how do you like Guam? What do you do with your days?" she asked kindly.

Effie caught her breath. "Why—nothing—" she answered. "We have breakfast, and I straighten up. Hugh's things are al-

ways in order, but I never bothered much, before—just tumbled my clothes in, the quickest way. Now I try to keep them neat.”

“But that doesn’t fill your day,” objected Mrs. Putnam.

“Oh, no! After that I look out of the window, or Major Forde comes to call, or I walk back to where I can’t hear the waves on the beach.”

“But the sound of the waves is pleasant!” cried Mrs. Putnam. “What should we do, during the hot weather, if we couldn’t hear the waves?”

Effie’s face hardened. “It’s such a lonely sound. I hate it!” she said.

Mrs. Putnam felt unaccountably sorry for her. “Do you read? But you must! Will you get the green book there—yes, please. It’s Conrad’s ‘Victory.’ You’ll enjoy it. If a person gets interested in books it opens a new world to them. And perhaps, later on when I’m better, I can help you with the cooking and sewing,” she promised.

Effie, obedient to a signal from the nurse, rose to go. For a second she stood silently by the bed, then: “I’m so sorry—that the

baby—died—” she said with awkward sincerity.

Mrs. Putnam’s eyes filled with tears. “Thank you,” she whispered.

Major Forde was waiting in the small parlor when Effie, hugging the book under her arm, came up the steps.

“I knew it!” he exclaimed dramatically. “Literature! And in this heat! Break it to me gently—Shakespeare or Bacon?”

“It’s ‘Victory’—Mrs. Putnam wanted me to read it,” explained Effie.

“Hm’m,” mused the major. “Now *why* is *she* bothering?” Aloud he said: “Mrs. Putnam hasn’t troubled much with the women here. Oh, I don’t mean that she snubs them—she just isn’t interested. Perhaps Hugh’s sister asked her to be nice to you?” he suggested.

“No,” answered Effie. “Hugh’s sister doesn’t—know me.”

“Well, I wondered!” commented the major, and ventured a quick question. “Chorus?” he asked.

“Yes,” answered Effie simply. She leaned

her head on her hand, brushing away the tiny beads of perspiration.

"Must seem pretty dull to you here—after your gay life," remarked the major.

Effie thought about it. "My life wasn't particularly gay, except that there were lots of girls to talk to and laugh with. We worked hard," she said.

"Where did Meredith come in?" inquired the major.

Effie brightened. "We had such a good time!" she answered almost gayly.

"Don't you have a good time now?" asked Major Forde.

"Yes—but it's—different," answered Effie.

"Hugh doesn't appreciate you? Grown tired?" suggested the major, and added: "Guess you're more *my* sort."

"Oh, no!" she assured him. "I've known lots of men like you—men who ask questions just as you do—they're around every stage door. The girls laugh about them."

Major Forde glanced sharply at her. "You're trying to get even," he accused.

"Oh, no," Effie repeated reflectively, and added: "It's odd—but nearly always the

wife of your kind of man doesn't live with him."

Major Forde arose. "Mrs. Forde is a great social favorite in Washington," he announced stiffly. "Her life, her friends, her amusements are outside of the experience of most of the people here."

"Does Mrs. Putnam know her?" asked Effie with amiable formality.

"Mrs. Putnam knows a great many people—Hugh's mother and sister, for instance," commented the major darkly, as he went down the steps.

Effie leaned her aching head on her hands. "*Why* do I care what he *says* or what the Merediths *think*?" she wondered.

Below, on the beach, the waves broke languidly; the palm-tree, at the corner of the house, rasped its dry leaves back and forth—back—and—forth.

"Victory" filled some hours of the long days. Effie read painstakingly and, at times, with faint enjoyment.

"Did you like it?" Mrs. Putnam asked; her face was whiter than when Effie had seen her before, but her voice was as kind.

Effie hesitated. "Yes—some," she answered. "Things happened on that island. They never do here. And it sounded sort of pretty."

"You're stone blind!" Mrs. Putnam assured her. "Guam is beautiful, and as for things happening—why each woman here is as busy as a mouse in a waste-paper basket! Which of the officers' wives do you like best?"

"Not any of them," answered Effie slowly. "The older ones are busy, and the younger ones play cards all the time. They're pleasant enough, but I don't know what to talk to them about. I've gone to their houses several times when I was *too* lonely, but they stopped playing cards and seemed to be waiting for me to go; and the last time—yesterday—one of them asked the others how to spell 'bore.' I won't go again," explained Effie.


Mrs. Putnam's voice was incredulous. "They didn't!" she exclaimed, and glanced at her guest, then laid a gentle hand over Effie's tightly interlaced fingers.

"Nothing like that could hurt *us*, could it? Because *we* know that the sort of woman who would say such a thing, or think it clever,

is so innately common that *nothing* she said would matter to us," said Mrs. Putnam, and added, as Effie's tense attitude relaxed: "You mustn't judge the navy women by the unfortunate group that happens, at this time, to be at Agaña. You may never encounter anything like it again, although in *any* gathering of women, social or professional, they're never all of one grade. But usually there are enough well-bred gentlewomen to leaven the mixture. Do try to get interested in books! You can't realize what it will mean to you."

Effie ignored the literary suggestion. "I wouldn't mind so much if I didn't realize that if Hugh had married one of his sister's friends these women wouldn't *dare* act so. *I cheapen him*," admitted Effie huskily. "Hugh's mother has never written him—since he married me."

"I've known Hugh's people all my life," said Mrs. Putnam. "Hugh's a great surprise to us these days! I thought his mother had succeeded in spoiling him. She certainly went about it right by giving him too much money and letting him think that having a



good time was the only necessary aim in life. But now my husband says Hugh's the hardest worker on the island. That's your influence!"

Effie flushed. "No, it's Hugh himself. But I hate to come between Hugh and his family. I know that you know about us—and Major Forde says——"

"Major Forde can't tell you anything about the Merediths, because he doesn't know them. We disliked him and his climbing wife too much to tolerate them. As for Mrs. Meredith—Hugh is the apple of her eye! Give her time. She'll come around if she thinks you don't need her. I'm surprised that she has held out as long as this. But you must study; better try another book. There's Conrad's 'Youth'—I've read it again and again!"

"Is it about islands?" asked Effie.

"No, it's a story of the sea. You can *hear* the waves!" said Mrs. Putnam.

Effie left the book on the table when she said good-by and made her way slowly toward her own house. Agaña dreamed heavily in the late sunshine. On the beach acres of seaside daffodils blossomed in prodigal lux-



uriance; tawny-colored butterflies floated above the convolvulus on wide and leisurely wings; hibiscus bloomed in tireless profusion along the hedges.

"I can't see anything beautiful here," grieved Effie.

As usual, Major Forde waited on the steps.

"I've been at Mrs. Putnam's; she looks very ill," Effie told him.

"Putnam's arranging to take her home on the next transport," answered the omniscient major, and added: "You'll miss her?"

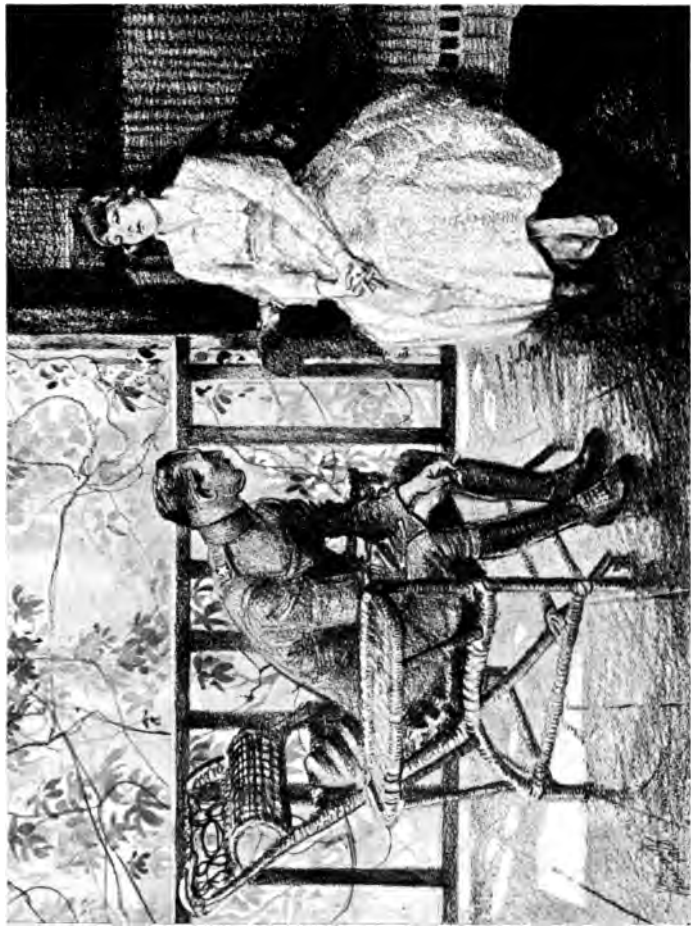
"It'll be lonely for you, especially as Hugh finds it convenient to be away so much," ventured the major after a pause.

Effie flared up. "Don't you dare speak so of Hugh—I won't have it!" she said.

Major Forde smiled. "Why don't you tell the truth?" he asked.

"It is the truth. Hugh's away working hard—trying to do his best, so that it will go on his record. He has had so much staff duty that he says no one believes that he can do anything else. He can't do good work and sit around on porches," vouchsafed Effie.

Major Forde flushed. "Men are always



“It’ll be lonely for you, especially as Hugh finds it convenient to be away so much.”



‘busy’ when they find it convenient,” he observed, shoving back his chair. From behind the cushion a folded letter dropped. The major stooped and picked it up. “Your Chamorro boy evidently dusts by putting things out of sight,” he commented critically as he rose to go. “I’m rather expecting to get away on the next transport myself,” he added.

“How splendid!” cried Effie, with such generous enthusiasm that the major glared affrontedly at her. “Glad you’re pleased,” he growled. “Hope you’ll enjoy the hot weather—it’s about due.”

After he had gone she came back to the chair by the window and, noticing the letter, picked it up.

“Pedro,” she called to the boy, who was yawningly setting the table, “where did this come from?”

“Him fall from capt’n’s coat when I take coat to press and pack away—as you tell me,” answered Pedro promptly.

Effie smiled, remembering Hugh’s whimsical remark, “Wish the Navy Department would promote me as fast as Pedro does!”

and opened the letter. The first words riveted her attention. It commenced, without salutation, "Hugh," and was dated two days after her marriage.

How could you—*how could you*—do such a thing? After all these years of living among gentle people, surrounded by the things that come from education and refinement, you show an innate commonness (for which I cannot account) by marrying this dreadful creature.


Do you expect me to present such a daughter-in-law to my friends? Do you expect your sister to welcome such a sister-in-law? (Your old friend, Billy Somers, said to her yesterday: "Cheer up, Eleanor! Almost every family has some disgraceful members.")

One one point you may be very certain. *Never*, until you can assure us that the woman you have married has gone permanently out of your life and your future, need you write or plan to see your sister or your heart-broken

MOTHER.

Effie read the letter three times; then, sitting motionless, stared, unseeing, at the wall in front of her. For once the palm-tree rasped unheeded against the house; the waves on the beach moaned to deaf ears.

Hot weather came early that year, and broke all records. Daylight, and a molten



copper sun, seemed to spring flaming over the misty horizon line long before the glare of the day before had faded from tired eyes. It was a time to test the endurance of the strongest, and Effie had neither the strength nor the logic necessary to face the long days. She slept so lightly that the sound of the sea and the rustle of the palm-tree seemed burned into her consciousness, as the brazen sky and oily water burned on her sight. She found herself trying to concentrate her attention on the wall, the floor, the table, to hold them by sheer will-power, from swinging and swaying in the glare. She longed for the night, that she might escape from the long hiss of the slow waves, the sawing of the palm-leaves against the house.

And when Hugh was at home he read books!

"Guam's a great place, Effie," he told her; "you'll never have time to study and read as you have here! Dickens, Thackeray, Stevenson—I never knew before how wonderful Stevenson is! You'd love some of his stories if you'd read them."

"What are they about?" asked Effie.

"All sorts of things! A lot of the best ones are about islands. I'll bring some over."

Effie never opened them.

"You're reading poetry, now," she said one evening, looking over his shoulder.

Hugh glanced up apologetically. "Seems foolish for a man, doesn't it?" he said.

"Rossetti, too!"

She read it slowly:

" 'Nay, why  
Name the dead hours? I mind them well:  
Their ghosts in many darkened doorways dwell  
With desolate eyes to know them by.' "

"It doesn't rhyme," said Effie.

Hugh smiled. "I don't believe he meant it to rhyme—but here! I'll read some Tennyson that rhymes: 'The Lady of Shalot.' "

He read it through.

"I like that better," agreed Effie. "Not the island nor the Sir—the 'tirralirra' man. We once had a property-man with coal-black curls. Greasy old thing!"

"Now you try reading one. There's a dandy called 'The Lotus Eaters.' "

"What's it about?" asked Effie.

"Oh, an island something like this. I

think of it when I'm walking to the office and see the blue sky running into the blue ocean and the heavy sunshine, and smell the ilang-ilang. Tennyson might have been writing of Guam!"

Effie laid the volume down. "All the books that were ever written are about islands or the sea," she thought desperately.

"Hugh," she ventured, "does Major Forde know your sister well?"

Hugh closed his book. "I should rather guess *not*," he said. "Nell wouldn't bother with him for a minute! He likes to pretend to know people—calls women he has met once or twice by their first names—he's really an awful bounder. I wouldn't have him here so much, if I were you."

"I don't like him—but he's some one to talk to," said Effie, and added slowly: "Your mother and sister will never know me, will they?"

Hugh flushed and swallowed hard. "If they won't they'll never know me either," he said. "We'll work it out together, Effie; only you must read and study while we are here. You'll be glad, when we get to some



livelier place, that you put your time in well while you could."

"How long will it be before we go to the livelier place? I mean, how long will we be here?"

"About two years—that's the usual term of duty."


Effie gasped. Two years! They had been there not quite four months. Twenty more months! Eighty-eight weeks! Six hundred and five days! In the silence the cocoanut-palm sounded like a giant file against the wall; the waves gave a gloating chuckle as they broke lazily on the sand.

"Doctor and Mrs. Putnam and Major Forde are going on the transport that stops day after to-morrow," said Effie.

"Good riddance to Forde. The new marine officer is a nice fellow, but his wife is another one of the card-sharps."

Mrs. Putnam and Major Forde, her only bulwarks against the unending days! Effie pressed her hands over her eyes.

Hugh, glancing up, noticed the whiteness of her face. "Aren't you feeling well, Effie?" he asked anxiously. "You'd better go to



bed. I'll have to be at the office late to-morrow evening, getting out those specifications the governor decided on to-day. He wants them to go on the transport. Don't wait up for me, will you?"

She shook her head. "I'm going to walk until I get tired, to-morrow—so I'll feel sleepy," she said.

Hugh spoke again of her pallor when she poured out his coffee at the breakfast-table. "You had better lie low, Effie; it's going to be a scorching day. The trade-wind has dropped; it's preparing for a typhoon."

"I'll stick to the house," she promised.

After he had gone she moved about putting things to rights, straightening the napkin that did duty for a table-cover, rearranging the folds of the curtains, interviewing the sleepy cook and drowsy house boy. It was so hot that the sky, like an inverted copper bowl, was reflected in the still water. Effie looked at the earth wavering feverishly in the heat haze and, going to her bedroom, buried her face in the pillows.

The morning crept by in leaden minutes. After an interminable time she could hear


the house boy setting the luncheon-table; then Hugh came in, his white uniform wet with perspiration. "Guess I'll have to take time for a plunge," he called.

Effie lifted her aching head and shook back her damp hair. "Is it as hot as this all the time?" she asked.

"No, later there's a rainy season when everything mildews; your shoes grow green whiskers, inside and out, overnight. But cheer up, Effie! To-day breaks all records. You wouldn't mind so much if you'd read and divert your mind."

"I haven't any mind to divert—and it's too hot to work it if I had," she answered indifferently.

After luncheon she went back to her room and lay, during the long afternoon, with her face turned from the window. Sometimes she dozed, coming back to consciousness with a sharp jerk, like an animal pulled up short by its tethering chain. At dinner-time she changed her dress and tried to tidy her hair, but the long red-gold strands clung to her damp neck and wound tightly around her arms with an almost fiendish persistency;



roughly she pulled her hand loose, jarring her head and bringing tears to her eyes. "I'd think it was trying to see how miserable it could make me," she fretted childishly.

At dinner even Hugh owned to being tired. "Awful day! I'll be home earlier than I expected, though; we put things through with a bang!"

"Don't have the house boy stay; I'd rather have him asleep at home than in the kitchen. I'll take down the old revolver, then I won't be frightened," said Effie.

"I'd be frightened if I thought you would try to use it," laughed Hugh. "Good-by, dear, I'll be back in a couple of hours."

In her room, after locking the doors and arming herself with the revolver, Effie sat on the floor by a window and, resting her elbows on the sill, looked out into the velvety blackness of the tropical night. It was cooler; the fishing-boats were out and the flare of their dry cocoanut torches blossomed with fitful intensity; deer, plundering gardens on the outskirts of Agaña, barked with impudent recklessness; gecko lizards scurried across the wall. The big stars seemed so near and

bright as to be almost friendly. Effie felt a lessening of the day's fever and tension.

"To-morrow," she thought, "I will begin to take an interest," for in spite of his mother's letter, Hugh talked to her of the future, never intimating that they would not spend the years ahead together.

She would like to discuss his mother's letter with him, but dared not bring the subject up.


"I'm going to begin studying *to-morrow*," vowed Effie. "I may be a 'creature,' but I needn't be an ignorant one! *To-morrow* I'll begin! *To-morrow*——"

A fumbling knock on the front door was repeated. Effie went silently out, revolver in hand. "Who's there?" she called.

"Major Forde, Mrs. Meredith! The transport's sighted, and I didn't know whether I'd have time to say good-by in the morning."

She laughed as she opened the door. "I was all ready!" she said, holding up the pistol.

Major Forde balanced unsteadily in the doorway. "Don't shoot me *now*," he begged.



"I'm getting away in the morning! Saw Hugh at the office and thought I'd drop in."

Effie glanced at his flushed face. "Good-bye party, I suppose," she commented dryly.

"You suppose correctly," he said, and sat down.

Effie looked at him uneasily and wished that he would go. Hugh would soon be home, and wouldn't like finding the major there.

"Transport's in sight! All aboard! It's a light trip—hardly any one travelling," said Major Forde.

Effie caught her breath.

"Better come along—lots of room," he said.

"How I wish I could!" she cried fervently.

"Come along! Mrs. Putnam's too sick to leave her stateroom; she transfers to a passenger steamer at the first stop, and no one else will know the difference."

Effie stared at him scornfully. "Go with you? Nothing like that!" she said with brutal honesty.

An ugly look came into his face. "I'll see your husband's mother and sister soon. Want to send them any message?"

"When I do I'll send it by some one they know," answered Effie.

He stood up. "I'll be damned at the airs the chorus puts on when it gets a chance! You'd better be grateful when people bother to speak to you——"

He stopped.

Hugh stood in the doorway. "I heard what you said, Forde. Get out—and be quick about it," he said.

The major glared at him; his innate cowardice bade him accept his humiliation and sneak away, but the bravado and pretense of years were second nature. "Fine airs! Fine airs!" he bellowed. "Bringing a chorus girl out here and trying to make decent people think you're married to her! Guess you didn't fool me! Guess you didn't fool any one—don't you *dare strike at me!*" he shrieked, and snatched at the old revolver lying on the table.

Over the noise of the scuffle and the thud of an overturned chair Effie's scream, as she dashed forward, mingled with the sharp report of the revolver.

Then, as the smoke cleared, she tottered

and fell, a limp heap, while a slowly spreading stain showed startlingly against the whiteness of her dress.

"Satisfied now, Forde?" asked Hugh, and knelt beside her as two officers, who had heard the explosion, came breathlessly up the steps.

She lived a few hours.

Toward dawn, in that still time when nature seems to hold its breath, she regained consciousness and whispered: "Hugh." Then as he leaned to hear the feeble voice: "Don't cry—better—so," she said.

Dumbly, the lonely soul looked through her heavy eyes. "I read—your mother's—letter. She won't—mind now." Few words and light to lie like an impassable barrier across the years, separating the mother, fiercely mourning her boy, from the man who returned.

Outside the cool wind that ushers in the dawn moved the palm-leaves stealthily against the house; on the beach the slow waves curved into foam. They sounded clearly in the quiet room.



She heard. The feeble ghost of her repulsion flickered for a second in her face. With the last of her strength she whispered: "That tree—and the sound of—the water—*how I—hate them——*"

## XII

### FLAGS

**THERE** is only one flag that takes precedence over the Stars and Stripes.

At a given hour on Sunday mornings aboard the dreadnoughts and battleships of the United States Navy the American flag is hauled down. When it is hoisted again it takes second place under the banner bearing the emblem of the Church of God. Aboard dreadnoughts, battleships, and transports of the navy, except for the time that white flag holds the place of honor, the chaplain is a free-lance; but this does not mean that the chaplain is idle.

The huge transport alongside the stone pier had suddenly ceased being the centre of interest. For ten days a constant stream of cargo, provisions, army equipment, stores, and baggage, had gone up the gangways, but on this eleventh day, except for the usual activities of the sailors—the transports are

manned by officers and sailors of the navy—and the lowering of four gangways, two forward, two aft, there was a suspension of activities.

Breakfast in the improvised ward-room was over. The chaplain, realizing that on this eventful day there would be small opportunity for him to pursue his regular duties, went to his cabin and after reading the lesson for the day and, as was his practice, the lesson for the approaching Sunday, turned to the last mail, which had just been put aboard.

Such a quantity of letters! Forwarded from a dozen places by a score of harassed officers to whom anxious relatives hoping to reach an official eye—and ear—had written last directions, messages, complaints, and warnings. There was an almost monotonous pathos in the recurrence of the words “my boy.”

The chaplain read all of them and made many notes, commencing with a reassuring letter to the worried wife of one of the transport's crew who questioned: “The allotment officer, in his report, changed my little girl into a little boy. Will it make any difference


in my allowance?" and ending with a comforting answer to a tear-stained scrawl from a sick and elderly mother.

"War is easiest on the men," commented the chaplain, looking with wistful helplessness at the pile of letters.

From outside, far away to landward, came the high, faint call of bugles. On the transport arose sounds of increasing activities; a petty officer and a company of sailors marched across the deck and descended to the pier, where they were stationed in twos at the foot of each gangway. The executive officer called a sharp question, which the officer of the deck changed to a quick command. Some noisy tugs approached. The chaplain, unheeding, took up his last letter; it was from his daughter, who as a Red Cross nurse was serving in a hospital just behind the lines.

DEAR DAD:

It seems too good to be true that I shall see you so soon! I'm counting the days. Well, I finished my time in the wounded prisoners' ward satisfactorily. If such a thing is possible, I worked even harder for them than I do for our own men—and I had my re-




ward! The day before I left, one of the Germans actually thanked me for doing something! I was startled! I couldn't decide whether to take his temperature or paste an adhesive-plaster medal on him.

Quite unexpectedly before I went to my new ward I was sent up to Paris about some delayed supplies, and how I longed for you! However, I did see three American sailors and, except for their air of stern, uncompromising rectitude in what they had evidently been warned was a gay city, I should have gone up and spoken to them—and been snubbed for a brazen, designing Jizzie-bell! As it was, I smiled at them—to their great embarrassment.

Dad, dear, isn't it a beautiful privilege to be allowed to help win this war? All of us—the boys in the army, marine corps, and navy. You and I. The women at home. *Every one*. Putting our shoulder to the wheel, so that defenseless small nations may know that to only a few blood-drunk, lust-mad brutes does might make right.

Lately German aviators have been busily engaged in trying to bomb our hospital buildings and the houses where the nurses are lodged. It's boring, after you've been on your feet all day and have just achingly hoisted yourself into bed, to have to get up and speed down to the cellar and cling to some one. I wish I had a long-range voice and could hoot into those aviators' ears: "*Never touched us, you big bullies!*"

But when it's all over—all cleaned up—you and I are going to have our house in the country, with mother's portrait over the mantel—and you can raise asparagus and I'll raise chickens. Do you mind if I specialize on white Wyandottes? I know that Rhode



Island Reds are the best layers, but they're such a homely color.

This letter should reach you before you leave America; I'll have another letter or a message waiting for you when you arrive in France. I can't tell yet whether I can get off or whether you'll have to visit me here. At any rate, every day now will bring you nearer to

Yours most lovingly, dad, dear,

ROSE.

P. S.—Do you know that sometimes when the horror of all this suffering used to get the better of me I *longed* for our garden—the one we are going to have. But lately I've felt that I could almost plan how I would have the flowers planted—they are actually “casting their shadows,” they're so near! What is it you say when you go into a room where some one is very ill: “Peace to this house and all who dwell therein!” Isn't it?

I wonder if *any* garden can ever equal the beautiful peace of these scarred battle-fields when the wild flowers and blossoming orchards cover them again? God grant it may be soon! But, dad, I feel so strongly that *peace is very near*.

The chaplain's eyes were bright with excited anticipation as he laid the letter down. He could hardly wait to see his daughter and tell her the great news.

A week ago, while spending forty-eight hours' leave with a friend of divinity-school days at his parsonage in a Connecticut vil-

lage, the chaplain had gone for a walk to the top of a near-by hill, and had chanced upon the house of his dreams. White, and low, and old, it nestled in a sheltered hollow and faced seaward to where the Sound glinted in the sunshine and gulls on flashing wings swooped and quarrelled. And inside, a wide centre hall—just as Rose and he had so often planned! But the miracle—the incredible miracle—had been disclosed when the brass-knobbed door swung back on a square parlor, panelled in white-painted wood from floor to ceiling.


The chaplain, remembering Rose's wistful remark, "We *never* can afford the *real*, so we'd better not even think about it," had gasped. "The original panelling?" he had questioned barely above a whisper.

The woman who was showing him over the house and who had told him that the old farm was for sale because a son who had gone West was "doing so well that he wanted the old folks to join him," had nodded disparagingly: "That parlor's just the way great-grandfather built it. We never had the money to make any improvements." she said.

The chaplain, pausing, had visualized the mellow old room when Rose should have installed their household treasures. Her mother's portrait—painted by a great artist in the spontaneous days before fame had claimed (and hampered) him—would hang on the wide panel over the fireplace. On the narrow mantel would stand the ivory carving acquired in Kyoto. There had only been enough money to buy a kimono *or* the carving, and Rose, after a longing glance at the embroidered roses on the delicate silk ground, had chosen the unfading beauty of the Japanese maiden standing on tiptoes to light a fragile ivory lantern—"To guide you safely home when your seagoing days are over, dad," she had interpreted. Then there were the Chinese bronze, the old embroidery, the grooved and fretted Moro bowl—waiting patiently for that long-anticipated home.

And the price named for the house and eight acres of orchard and meadow had been within obtainable reach. The chaplain had paid the first instalment that day.

"It's too good to be true!" the chaplain had whispered, standing in the neglected





garden and looking to where the gnarled old apple-trees showed the pink of blossoms against an unclouded sky, and irregular stone fences were silvery gray across the spring-time green. From somewhere near a robin had fluttered down and, balancing, had called—and waited—and called again.

That robin was a last drop in the brimming measure of the chaplain's delight and satisfaction. He could hardly wait to tell Rose——

Across his day-dream the increasing noise outside struck sharply. The bugles were very near now and drums added their pulse-like beat. In the passageway the doctor, hurrying past, called cheerily: "Better get up on deck, padre—*they're coming!*"

Quickly the chaplain gathered up the scattered letters into a neat pile and, putting away his books, reached the deck just as the bugles sounded at the pier end and the band swung into position. There was a flash of red, white, and blue as the flag whipped out on the breeze and the color-bearers wheeled into line. Again the bugles, high and clear, sang their overlapping orders;

behind the flag, row on row, filling the wide pier with the olive drab of their uniforms, came the men of America's new army, and marched toward the transport, while the band fared cheerfully into the music of "The Long Trail."

The doctor and the chaplain watched the lines of soldiers advance and divide. At the foot of the gangways, sailors, stationed there, threw around each soldier's neck a cord, to which was attached a card bearing the number of that soldier's compartment, his bunk, and his food-station. Also certain instructions for troops.

At the top of the gangways naval officers waited and, when one hundred and fifty soldiers had gathered, led them to the compartment assigned. And all the time the band played steadily the songs of the old and new armies: "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Tipperary," "Good-by, Dolly Gray," "Sons of America," "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching," "There'll Be a Hot Time," and "Over There."

For two hours the monotonous tramp of marching feet continued, broken only by

the occasional soldier who lost step smuggling some favorite animal aboard. "When all those felines get shaken down and feel at home, we will wake up some night and imagine that the ship has sprouted a back fence," remarked the doctor, as he observed the struggles of one youthful soldier and a large, unabashed, and needlessly conspicuous gray cat.

"He's hungry—so am I!" volunteered the boy.

So were all of them. Hardly were they aboard when they became one vociferous, empty interrogation-point. The tugs, puffing and shrieking alongside, assailed ears that were deaf to all sound but the impending mess-call. Lined up, their mess-gear in hand, they were conscious that the ship moved—and did not care when, promptly at noon, more than a dozen modern cafeterias broke all speed records in serving food to the long lines of marching men. Thousands of soldiers were fed in less than twenty minutes.

In the ward-room the executive officer took his seat at one end of the lengthened table and smiled at the chaplain, far away

at the foot. "Our family's grown, padre," he called cheerfully. "Feel as though I were looking at you through the wrong end of a telescope!"

The army officers commanding the regiments aboard joined in the conversation gradually. Slowly there came the hum of the engines—the transport was under way.


When the chaplain joined the officers in the ward-room for breakfast the next morning the transport was well out to sea and already, among the thousands of men aboard, an organization for efficiency in the daily routine, and in case of emergency, was being perfected. The chaplain, returning to his cabin, heard the army officers explaining to their men the need of cleanliness. "They were not to add to the work of the transport's crew by throwing anything on the decks. And nothing was to be thrown overboard, for fear of leaving a trail by which an enemy's submarine could track them over the road of the sea. Every compartment must be ready to bear inspection at all times."

The chaplain finished reading the lesson

for the day just as the bugle sounded "quarters," and he lined up with the other naval officers who handed the report for their divisions to the executive officer and accounted for such sailors as were absent in the sick-bay or the brig. The chaplain, having no department, merely answered, "At quarters, sir," when his turn came. ("I'm always glad to know that you haven't fallen overboard, padre," the executive had jocularly remarked when, at different times, the chaplain had absent-mindedly forgotten "quarters.")

This finished, the chaplain started on his rounds. The sick-bay harbored three patients, and the chaplain spent an argumentative hour discussing the Red Sox's last game. Perhaps because he had been a well-known athlete during his college days, his reign as umpire of games between the baseball and football teams of rival ships had outlasted that of many less-qualified judges, particularly as the chaplain had acquired the necessary boon of deafness during certain hotly contested crises.

"I guess it's lucky that I really don't understand *what they are* yelling, sometimes,"



the chaplain explained apologetically to the executive, who was only too glad to enlist "the padre's" assistance in dealing with a certain type of sullen trouble-maker. It was an unusual brand of moodiness that could withstand a boxing-bout with the chaplain, who staged his performance on the hilarious lower deck.

Outside, as he left the sick-bay, he stopped to watch a company of soldiers who were taking instruction in the adjustment and use of life-preservers, and smiled to see one intent lad seriously considering their adaptability to his feet.

"That attempt to stand on the water never gets outlawed," mused the chaplain, edging his way past a group that were busily engaged in preparing a mountainous heap of vegetables for dinner.


The brig was sparsely tenanted; the chaplain, after a short talk with the sailor there, found the trouble to be one of misunderstanding rather than the apparently deliberate intention of wrong-doing. A few moments' conversation with the executive released the prisoner and returned him to the busy deck,

where lookouts were being selected and instructed, boat drills carried forward, meals being prepared, watches arranged, and cleaning and scrubbing always under way.

On deck, as the soldiers lined up for mess-call, some one started a song. Around the ship it swept from one group to another; a second and third song followed until the opening of the cafeterias made a vitally important and serious interruption.

At the ward-room luncheon-table the chaplain found himself precipitated into a discussion on the nationality of religions and was promptly appealed to for a decision. "I didn't hear the first of this," he apologized.

An army officer leaned forward: "I started it, sir, with a story that one of the English naval officers in Washington told me. It was about sending church-parties ashore from their ships when they are in port, and he said: 'So, on Sunday morning, when the ship's company was mustered, I called out: "Church of England, fall in on the right! Catholic Church, fall in on the left! Fancy religions, fall in at the rear!" and still there were three men left over. "Why didn't you



fall in?" I demanded. "We didn't know where we belonged," one of them answered, and added: "We're Mormons!"


"Did you ever hear such cheeky beggars? 'Mormons!' I told them. 'Well, if that isn't fancy I don't know what is.' " And then he asked me: 'It's an American religion purely, isn't it?'

"Is it, padre?" called several voices. But the chaplain laughed and denied any information on the subject.

"If there's one person in the world that doesn't know anything about fancy religion it's the padre," affirmed the executive warmly, and added to the army officer next him: "The chaplain's the finest sportsman I know—with all a sportsman's intolerance of cowards or sneaks."

After luncheon he spent two busy hours giving out books from the library, answering questions about new regulations, compulsory and voluntary allotments, and explaining the new war-insurance act.

"Of course I know it's good," he assured a cautious sailor. "I wouldn't sleep so well at night if I didn't know that, in case any-





thing happens to me, I've taken out enough insurance to give my daughter a start."

Later the chaplain had his first intimate view of the soldiers, who when not busy spent their time on deck. Shyly he approached them, wondering if they were discussing the hardships they would bear, the sacrifices they must make, the battles in which, no doubt, some of them would lay down their lives.

But no! The conversations swung from the dignitaries of their little home towns to the leading characters in the latest Broadway shows; from the description of a closely contested polo-match to the grim details of a coal-mine accident; from the account of the escapades of a college fraternity's hazing delegates to a laconic outline of the experiences of a band of prospectors during a desert sand-storm.


The chaplain went from group to group of the heterogeneous crowd who, in response to the call of their country, had put on the khaki or the blue. There were men from all the professions; there were multimillionaires and laborers; country lads who had never seen more water than flows through a farmyard

pasture; adventurers who had voyaged on all the Seven Seas; men from little hamlets; others, familiar with the great cities of every continent; men speaking three or four languages, and others who could scarcely achieve understandable English.

"It's amazing!" mused the chaplain, searching about for lonely or homesick-looking boys—in need of cheering.

Later he drifted into the daily moving-picture show and viewed the hair-raising episodes of a modern cinema courtship. This reel was followed by a film depicting the visit by a murderously inclined tramp to a lonely house, where a lady in evening dress, after a heartrending scene with her mercenary and nomadic cook, faced the very long, very dark night unprotected. When this was finished the chaplain thankfully moved outside and enjoyed a few moments of unalloyed gratitude for the kindly fate that permitted him to pursue a quiet and peaceful life aboard the transports traversing the war zone.

"There's nothing for me to do here," decided the chaplain. "Guess I'll tackle some of those letters."



But before he sat down at his desk he paused a second. Far away—he saw a low white house facing seaward—and an orchard where robins called—from blossoming apple-trees. The chaplain was growing old—and Rose—and home, and happiness—beckoned enticingly.


Long afterward, looking back over the events of that voyage, the chaplain remembered with curious clearness that each lesson for the day had seemed, with a strange insistence, to sound a note of warning. Almost monotonously the old prophets called across the centuries their messages against the futility of human hopes and plans. Ezekiel—that “son of man” from whom the desire of his eyes was taken at a single stroke; Isaiah—Hosea—and each day he read the lesson for Sunday, Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple, with its supplication: “And when thou hearest, forgive.” But he went his unheeding way.

His hours were crowded with varied duties. He was, to the crew, an encyclopædia of information on all sorts of subjects, and already

he was scheduled to preside at several weddings and christenings when the ship should be in port, after the return voyage. He taught a school for those desiring to attend; he gave short talks on French history, and his voluntary audiences soon outgrew the quarters assigned; he held a Bible class. And the letters received from the relatives of soldiers on the day the transport sailed must be answered and, when the voyage was over, the sentence added: "To-day I saw your boy, well and happy, land, and march away upon the soil of France." Meanwhile the busy hours sped by; the end of the journey was near.

Sunday morning found the transport on the edge of the war zone, and, even as the bugler sounded church-call, the lookouts were trebled and gunners took their places at the loaded guns.

On the quarter-deck row after row of messbenches filled the entire space; chairs, for the captain and officers, stood at right angles, facing the improvised altar—a table, covered with an altar-cloth, and holding a brass cross.



Behind it, against the bulkhead, was draped an American flag; in front of the altar, to the right, was the pulpit; to the left the portable organ.


Promptly, in answer to the bugle-call, a steady stream of soldiers and sailors came from all directions, until every foot of available space was filled. The captain and officers took their places; a master-at-arms reported all aft, and the chaplain, stepping to the pulpit, gave out the hymn. It was an old hymn, and they sang it vigorously—thousands of boyish voices ringing out across the serene, sunshiny sea. The lesson for the day emphasized the general peacefulness. It was Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple—that prayer with an almost bell-like refrain: "Forgive, forgive, forgive."

There followed another hymn; then the chaplain read the text and commenced his sermon. It was very little like a sermon ashore; no tinge of "fancy religion" colored the plain, straightforward discourse. The chaplain had been dealing with enlisted men for years; he knew their problems and their temptations, as well as their tendencies toward

certain mistakes, and watching their intent faces, he knew when a remark went home—as he warned, explained, rebuked, in words of incontrovertible simplicity. And in closing he spoke of courage—that high, clear answer to the call of duty which has nothing in common with bravado or excitement or the enthusiasms that are so often only imitative.

The service ended with the singing of the national anthem.

During the last verse commotion spread among the men nearest the rail, and, even as the chaplain pronounced the benediction, "The peace of God—which passeth all understanding—" an orderly waited impatiently to report to the captain, "Convoy of destroyers sighted, sir!" and the men crowded to get a view of the slim, knife-bowed greyhounds advancing, with amazing rapidity, on the scent of trouble. Swiftly they came, swept in a wide circle, and fell in their places, passing so close that, as they swung into formation, the chaplain, going to his cabin, overheard a junior naval officer on the transport—under cover of the soldiers' cheering—



warily hail a chum on the bridge of the nearest destroyer: "Hi, Muggy! Made a special trip to Philadelphia to see your new son! Looks like you—but maybe he'll outgrow it!"

That night every one aboard the transport was ordered to sleep in their clothes and to wear life-preservers, and in the passages dim blue lights marked, at rare intervals, the turns or ladders.

But in the morning land was in sight—and later a port in France; a great, cheering crowd; the excited confusion of the soldiers, packing; good-bys; a stone pier; the lowered gangways; once more the monotonous tramp of feet, this time turned shoreward—and over all the sprightly cheerfulness of the band, the call of bugles. The voyage was over.

The chaplain, after numberless good wishes and a lengthy stand at the rail watching the protracted disembarkation, turned tiredly away as the last row of olive-drab uniforms disappeared between the cheering crowds up the old street.

Already the tide of cargo was turning again toward the ship; some mail-bags were com-

ing aboard, and the chaplain, remembering Rose's promised letter or message, hailed the passing orderly.

"Why, yes, sir," the sailor answered. "I couldn't find you, so I left a telegram in your cabin, about five minutes ago."

Joyously the chaplain hurried to get it. He had forgotten, in the depression of seeing the young soldiers go ashore, that his daughter was so near. Perhaps the despatch would tell him that, in a few hours, he would see Rose and tell her of the old house, the panelled parlor, the blossoming orchard where robins sang. When the war was over, there need be no delay in hanging the portrait over the fireplace and domiciling the white chickens.

But first, perhaps, they might have a vacation together in Paris, if Rose could get away. There were pictures and statues to see; churches and tombs to visit; a present to be bought. Rose's twenty-fourth birthday was next week, and even in war times wrist-watches must be for sale in Paris. She didn't care for jewelry—but a watch was different.

And if she couldn't get away he must find how to get to her, for, after all, that was the



main thing. Outside, the executive officer, hurrying past, called, "Good luck—and a good time, padre," as the chaplain tore open the envelope and read the message.

Long afterward—when he raised his head—and faced the future, the years stretched grayly beyond. There would be no old house looking seaward—no fireplace with a portrait above it. The robin had flown with the unreturning spring—and Rose—with the bright hair—the deft fingers so quick to aid the sick or suffering—the happy spirit that answered so readily to laughter or tears—crushed into silence.

The German aviators had struck their target under the Red Cross flag.

For every human being there is some key that unlocks the gates of memory. It may be the vagrant scent of lilies; a bar of music; the aching grind of car-wheels; the intonation of a voice; the earliest call of a bird across the dawn; the sight of rain-soaked, wind-blown lilacs; the lilt of an old song; the grim smell of hospital waiting-rooms—

and behold! the gates swing back on the garden of memory, dream-heavy days of other years, and the drenching radiance of the light that never was.

For the chaplain it is the sight of blue smoke from the chimneys of small homes and the words of a chapter in Kings—Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple—with its lovely, bell-like refrain. In the chaplain's work it recurs at intervals as part of the lesson for the day, and he reads the stately, measured words in a level, emotionless voice.

Statesmen may decide what constitutes victory and reparation; when and where flags may float and what they shall signify to brave and honest men; but one flag and the soldiers who serve under it the chaplain will never forgive.





